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*Riviera Towns*

by  
*Herbert Adams Gibbons*

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**RIVIERA  
TOWNS**











1847

"The hill of Cagnes we could rave about"

# RIVIERA TOWNS

By  
HERBERT ADAMS GIBBONS

*With Thirty-two Full-Page Illustrations*

By  
LESTER GEORGE HORNBY



NEW YORK  
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H. A. G.

L. G. H.





## **RIVIERA TOWNS**



## **RIVIERA TOWNS**



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**GRASSE**

**[ 1 ]**





## RIVIERA TOWNS

### CHAPTER I

#### GRASSE

**F**OR several months I had been seeing Grasse every day. The atmosphere of the Midi is so clear that a city fifteen miles away seems right at hand. You can almost count the windows in the houses. Against the rising background of buildings every tower stands out, and you distinguish one roof from another. From my study window at Théoule, Grasse was as constant a temptation as the two islands in the Bay of Cannes. But the things at hand are the things that one is least liable to do. They are reserved for "some day" because they can be done "any day." Since first coming to Théoule, I had been a week's journey south of Cairo into the Sudan, and to Verdun in an opposite corner of France. Menton

## RIVIERA TOWNS

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and St. Raphaël, the ends of the Riviera, had been visited. Grasse, two hours away, remained unexplored.

I owe to the Artist the pleasure of becoming acquainted with Grasse. One day a telegram from Bordeaux stated that he had just landed, and was taking the train for Théoule. The next evening he arrived. I gave him my study for a bedroom. The following morning he looked out of the window, and asked, "What is that town up there behind Cannes, the big one right under the mountains?"

"Grasse, the home of perfumes," I answered.

"I don't care what it's the home of," was his characteristic response. "Is it old and all right?" ("All right" to the Artist means "full of subjects.")

"I have never been there," I confessed.

The Artist was fresh from New York. "We'll go this morning," he announced.

From sea to mountains, the valley between the Corniche de l'Estérel and Nice produces every kind of vegetation known to the Mediterranean littoral. Memories of Spain, Algeria, Egypt, Palestine, Asia Minor, Greece and Italy are constantly before you. But there is a difference. The familiar trees and bushes and flowers of the Orient do not spring here from bare earth. Even where cultivated land, wrested from the mountain sides, is laboriously terraced, stones do not predominate. Earth and rock are hidden by a thick undergrowth of grass and creepers that defies the sun, and draws from the nearby mountain snow a perennial supply of water. Olive and

## GRASSE

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plane, almond and walnut, orange and lemon, cedar and cork, palm and umbrella-pine, grape-vine and flower-bush have not the monopoly of green. It is the Orient without the brown, the Occident with the sun.

The Mediterranean is more blue than elsewhere because firs and cedars and pines are not too green. The cliffs are more red than elsewhere because there is no prevailing tone of bare, baked earth to modify them into brown and gray. On the Riviera one does not have to give up the rich green of northern landscapes to enjoy the alternative of brilliant sunshine.

As we rode inland toward Grasse, the effect of green underground and background upon Oriental foliage was shown in the olives, dominant tree of the valley and hill-sides. It was the old familiar olive of Africa and Asia and the three European peninsulas, just as gnarled, just as gray-green in the sun, just as silvery in the wind. But its colors did not impress themselves upon the landscape. Here the olive was not master of all that lives and grows in its neighborhood. In a landscape where green replaces brown and gray pink, the olive is not supreme. Its own foliage is invaded: for frequently rose ramblers get up into its branches, and shoot out vivid flashes of crimson and scarlet. There is also the yellow of the mimosa, and the inimitable red of the occasional judas-tree. Orange trees blossom white. Lilacs and wisteria give the shades between red and blue. As if in rebellion against too much green, the rose-bushes put forth leaves of russet-brown. It is a half-hearted protest, however, for Grasse rose-

## RIVIERA TOWNS

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bushes are sparing of leaves. Carefully cultivated for the purpose of bearing to the maximum, every shoot holds clusters beyond what would be the breaking-point were there not artificial support. Nature's yield is limited only by man's knowledge, skill and energy.

As we mounted steadily the valley, we had the impression that there was nothing ahead of us but olives. First the perfume of oranges and flowers would reach us. Then the glory of the roses would burst upon us, and we looked up from them to the flowering orange trees. Wherever there was a stretch of meadow, violets and daisies and buttercups ran through the grass. Plowed land was sprinkled with mustard and poppies. The olive had been like a curtain. When it lifted as we drew near, we forgot that there were olives at all!

The Artist developed at length his favorite theory that the richest colors, the sweetest scents were those of blossoms that bloomed for pure joy. The most delicate flavors were those of fruits and berries that grew without restraint or guidance. "Nature is at her best," he explained, "when you do not try to exploit her. Compare wild strawberries and wild asparagus with the truck the farmers give you. Is wisteria useful? What equals the color of the judas-tree in bloom? Do fruit blossoms, utilitarian embryo, compare for a minute with real flowers? Just look at all these flowers, born for the sole purpose of expressing themselves!" All the while we were sniffing orange-blossoms. I tried in vain to get his honest opinion on horse-chestnut blossoms as compared

## GRASSE

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with apples and peaches and apricots. I called his attention to the fact that the ailanthus lives only to express itself, while the maple gives sugar. But you can never argue with the Artist when he is on the theme of beauty for beauty's sake.

From the fairyland of the valley we came suddenly upon the Grasse railway station, from which a *funiculaire* ascends to the city far above. Thankful for our carriage, we continued to mount by a road that had to curve sharply at every hundred yards. We passed between villas with pergolas of ramblers and wisteria until we found ourselves in the upper part of the city without having gone through the city at all.

We got out at the promenade, where a marvelous view of the Mediterranean from Antibes to Théoule lies before you. The old town falls down the mountain-side from the left of the promenade. We started along a street that seemed to slide down towards the cathedral, the top of whose belfry hardly reaches the level of the promenade. Before we had gone a block, we learned that the flowers through which we had passed were not blooming for pure joy. Like many things in this dreary world of ours, they were being cultivated for money's sake and not for beauty's sake. Grasse lives from those flowers in the valley below. We had started to look for quaint houses. From one of the first doors in the street came forth an odor that made us think of the type of woman who calls herself "a lady." I learned early in life at the barber's that a little bit of scent goes too far, and some women



## RIVIERA TOWNS

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in public places who pass you fragrantly do not allow that lesson to be forgotten. Is not lavender the only scent in the world that does not lose by an overdose?

The Artist would not enter. His eye had caught a fourteenth-century *cul-de-sac*, and I knew that he was good for an hour. I hesitated. The vista of the street ahead brought more attraction to my eye than the indication of the perfume-factory to my nose. But there would still be time for the street, and in the acquisition of knowledge one must not falter. I knew only that perfumes were made from flowers. But so was honey! What was the difference in the process? Visiting perfumeries is evidently "the thing to do" in Grasse. For I was greeted cordially, and given immediately a guide, who assured me that she would show me all over the place and that it was no trouble at all.

Why is it that some of the most delicate things are associated with the pig, who is himself far from delicate? However much we may shudder at the thought of soused pigs' feet and salt pork and Rocky Mountain fried ham swimming in grease, we find bacon the most appetizing of breakfast dishes, and if cold boiled ham is cut thin enough nothing is more dainty for sandwiches. Lard *per se* is unpleasant, but think of certain things cooked in lard, and the unrivaled golden brown of them! Pigskin is as *recherché* as snakeskin. The pig greets us at the beginning of the day when we slip our wallet into our coat or fasten on our wrist-watch, and again when we go in to breakfast. But is it known that he is responsible



**"His eye had caught a fourteenth-century cul-de-sac"**



## GRASSE

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for the most exquisite of scents of milady's boudoir? For hundreds of years ways of extracting the odor of flowers were tried. Success never came until someone discovered that pig fat is the best absorbent of the *bouquet* of fresh flowers.

Room after room in the perfume factory is filled with tubs of pig grease. Fresh flowers are laid inside every morning for weeks, the end of the treatment coming only with the end of the season of the particular flower in question. In some cases it is continued for three months. The grease is then boiled in alcohol. The liquid, strained, is your scent. The solid substance left makes scented soap. Immediately after cooling, it is drawn off directly into wee bottles, the glass stoppers are covered with white chamois skin, and the labels pasted on.

I noticed a table of bottles labeled *eau-de-cologne*. "Surely this is now *eau-de-liège* in France," I remarked. "Are not German names taboo?"

My guide answered seriously: "We have tried our best here and in every perfumery in France. But dealers tell us that they cannot sell *eau-de-liège*, even though they assure their customers that it is exactly the same product, and explain the patriotic reason for the change of name. Once we launched a new perfume that made a big hit. Afterwards we discovered that we had named it from the wrong flower. But could we correct the mistake? It goes today by the wrong name all over the world."

I was glad to get into the open air again, and started to walk along the narrow Rue Droite—which makes a

## RIVIERA TOWNS

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curve every hundred feet!—to find the Artist. I had seen enough of Grasse's industry. Now I was free to wander at will through the maze of streets of the old town. But the law of the Persians follows that of the Medes. Half a dozen urchins spied me coming out of the perfumery, and my doom was sealed. They announced that they would show me the way to the confectionery. I might have refused to enter the perfumery. But, having entered, there was no way of escaping the confectionery. I resigned myself to the inevitable. It was by no means uninteresting, however,—the half hour spent watching violets, orange blossoms and rose petals dancing in cauldrons of boiling sugar, fanned dry on screens, and packed with candied fruits in wooden boxes for America. And I had followed the flowers of Grasse to their destination.

The Artist had finished his *cul-de-sac*. I knew that to find him I had only to continue along the Rue Droite to the first particularly appealing side street. He would be up that somewhere. The Artist is no procrastinator. He takes his subjects when he finds them. The buildings of the Rue Droite are medieval from *rez-de-chaussée* to cornice. The sky was a narrow curved slit of blue and gray, not as wide as the street; for the houses seemed to lean towards one another, and here and there roofs rubbed edges. Sidewalks would have prevented the passage of horse-drawn vehicles, so there were none. The Rue Droite is the principal shopping-street of Grasse. But shoppers cannot loiter indefinitely before windows.

## GRASSE

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All pedestrians must be agile. When you hear the *Hué!* of a driver, you must take refuge in a doorway or run the risk of axle-grease and mud. Twentieth-century merchandise stares out at you from either side—Paris hats and gowns, American boots, typewriters, sewing-machines, phonographs, pianos. One of the oldest corner buildings, which looks as if it needed props immediately to save you from being caught by a falling wall, is the emporium of enamel bathtubs and stationary washstands, with shining nickel spigots labeled “Hot” and “Cold.” These must be intended for the villas of the environs, for surely no home in this old town could house a bathroom. Where would the hot water and cold water come from? And where would it go after you opened the waste-pipe?

But there are sewers, or at least drains, on the hillside. Grasse has progressed beyond the *gare-à-l'eau* stage of municipal civilization. Before your eyes is the evidence that you no longer have to listen for that cry, and duck the pot or pail emptied from an upper window. Pipes, with branches to the windows, come down the sides of the houses. They are of generous size, as in cities of northern countries where much snow lies on the roofs. Since wall-angles are many, the pipes generally find a place in corners. They do not obtrude. They do not suggest zinc or tin. They were painted a mud-gray color a long time ago.

After lunch, we strolled along the Boulevard du Jeu-de-Ballon, the tramway street. In old French towns, the

## RIVIERA TOWNS

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words *boulevard* and *tramway* are generally anathema. They suggest the poor imitation of Paris, both in architecture and animation, of a street outside the magic circle of the unchanged which holds the charm of the town. But sometimes, in order to come as near as possible to the center of population, the tramway boulevard skirts the fortifications of the medieval city, or is built upon their emplacement. It is this way at Grasse. One side of the Boulevard du Jeu-de-Ballon is modern and commonplace. The other side preserves in part the buildings of past ages. Here and there a bit of tower remains. No side street breaks the line. You go down into the city through an occasional arched passage.

We stopped for coffee at the Garden-Bar, on the modern side of the boulevard. The curious hodge-podge opposite, which houses the Restaurant du Cheval Blanc and the Café du Globe, had caught the Artist's eye. The building, or group of buildings, is six stories high, with a sky-line that reflects the range of mountains under which Grasse nestles. Windows of different sizes, placed without symmetry or alignment, do not even harmonize with the roof above them. Probably there was originally a narrow house rising directly above the door of the Cheval Blanc. When the structure was widened, upper floors or single rooms were built on *ad libitum*. The windows give the clew to this evolution, for the wall has been plastered and whitewashed uniformly to the width of over a hundred feet, and there is only one entrance on the ground floor. Working

## GRASSE

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out the staircases and floor levels is a puzzle for an architect. We did not even start to try to solve it. The Artist's interest was in the "subject," and mine in the story the building told of an age when man's individual needs influenced his life more strongly than they do now. We think of the progress of civilization in the terms of combination, organization, community interest, the centralized state. We have created a machine to serve us, and have become servants of the machine. When we thank God unctuously that we live not as our ancestors lived and as the "uncivilized" live today, we are displaying the decay of our mental faculties. Is it the Arab at his tent door, looking with dismay and dread at the approach of the Bagdad Railway, who is the fool, or we?

Backed up at right angles to the stoop of the Cheval Blanc was a grandfather omnibus, which certainly dated from the Second Empire. Its sign read: GRASSE-ST. CÉZAIRE. SERVICE DE LA POSTE. The canvas boot had the curve of ocean waves. A pert little hood stuck out over the driver's seat. The pair of lean horses—one black, the other white—stood with noses turned towards the tramway rails. The Artist was still gazing skylineward. I grasped his arm, and brought his eyes to earth. No word was needed. He fumbled for his pencil. But to our horror the driver had mounted, and was reaching for the reins. I got across the street just in time to save the picture. Holding out cigars to the driver and a soldier beside him on the box,



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I begged them to wait—*please* to wait—just five minutes, five little minutes.

“There is no place for another passenger. We are full inside,” he remonstrated.

But he had dropped the reins to strike a match. In the moment thus gained, I got out a franc, and pressed it into his hand.

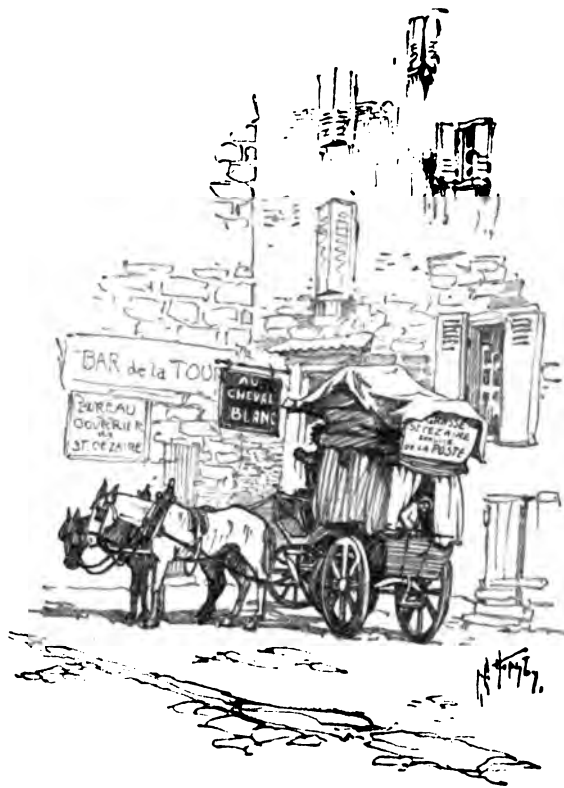
“Your coach, my friend,” I said, “is unique in all France. The coffee of that celebrated artist yonder sitting at the terrace of the Garden-Bar is getting cold while he immortalizes the Grasse-St. Cézaire service. In the interest of art and history, I beg of you to delay your departure ten little minutes.”

The soldier had found the cigar to his liking. “A quarter of an hour will do no harm at all,” he announced positively, getting down from his place.

The driver puffed and growled. “We have our journey to make, and the hour of departure is one-thirty. If it is not too long—fifteen minutes at the most.” He pocketed the franc less reluctantly than he had spoken.

The soldier crossed the boulevard with me. Knowing how to appreciate a good thing, he became our ally as soon as he had looked at the first lines of the sketch. When the minutes passed, and the soldier saw that the driver was growing restless, he went back and persuaded him to come over and have a look at the drawing. This enabled me to get the driver tabled before a tall glass of steaming coffee with a *petit verre*.

Soon an old dame, wearing a bonnet that antedated



"A grandfather omnibus, which dated from the Second Empire"



## GRASSE

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the coach, stuck out her head. A watch was in her hand. Surely she was not of the Midi. Fearing that she might influence the driver disadvantageously to our interests, I went to inform her that the delay was unavoidable. I could not offer her a cigar. There are never any bonbons in my pocket. So I thought to make a speech.

"All my excuses," I explained, "for this regrettable delay. The coach in which you are seated—and in which in a very, very few minutes you will be riding—belongs to the generation before yourself and me. It is important for the sake of history as well as art that the presence in Grasse of my illustrious artist friend, coincident with the St. Cézaire coach before the door of the Cheval Blanc, be seized upon to secure for our grandchildren an indelible memory of travel conditions in our day. So I beg indulgence."

Two schoolgirls smothered a snicker. There was a dangerous glitter in the old dame's eye. She did not answer me. But a young woman raised her voice in a threat to have the driver dismissed. Enough time had been gained. The Artist signified his willingness to have the mail leave now for St. Cézaire.

Off went the coach, white horse and black horse clattering alternately hoofs that would gladly have remained longer in repose. The soldier saluted. The driver grinned. We waved to the old woman with the poke bonnet, and lifted our glasses to several pretty girls who appeared at the coach door for the first time in order

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that they might glare at us. I am afraid I must record that it was to glare. Our friendly salutation was not answered. But we had the sketch. That was what really mattered.

We were half an hour late at the rendezvous with our carriage man for the return journey to Cannes. But he had lunched well, and did not seem to mind. Americans were scarce this season, and *fortes pourboires* few and far between. On the Riviera—as elsewhere—you benefit by your fellow-countrymen's generosity in the radiant courtesy and good nature of those who serve you until you come to pay your bill. Then you think you could have got along pretty well with less smiles. We knew that our man would not risk his *pourboire* by opposing us, so we suggested with all confidence that he drive round the curves alone and meet us below by the railway station in "half an hour." We wanted to go straight down through the city. The *cocher* looked at his watch and thought a minute. He had already seen the Artist stop suddenly and stay glued on one spot, like a cat patiently waiting to spring upon a bird. He had seen how often oblivion to time comes. The lesser of two evils was to keep us in sight. So he proposed with a sigh what we could never have broached to him. "Perhaps we can drive down through the city—why not?" "Why not?" we answered joyously in unison, as we jumped into the victoria.

Down is down in Grasse. I think our *cocher* did not realize what he was getting into, or he would have pre-

## GRASSE

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ferred taking his chances on a long wait. He certainly did not know his way through the old town. He asked at every corner, each time more desperately, as we became engaged in a maze of narrow streets, which were made before the days of victorias. There was no way of turning. We had to go down—precipitously down. With brake jammed tight, and curses that echoed from wall to wall and around corners, the *cocher* held the reins to his chest. The horses, gently pushed forward, much against their will, by the weight of the carriage, planted all fours firm and slid over the stones that centuries of sabots and hand-carts had worn smooth. The noise brought everyone to windows and doors, and the sight kept them there. Tourist victorias did not coast through Grasse every day. Advice was freely proffered. The angrier our *cocher* became the more frequently he was told to put on his brake and hold tight to the reins.

After half an hour we came out at the funicular beside the railway station.

“How delightful, and how fortunate!” exclaimed the Artist. “That certainly was a short cut. We have saved several kilometers!”

I thought the *cocher* would explode. But he merely nodded. Far be it from me to say that he did not understand the Artist’s French for “short cut.” Perhaps he thought best to save all comment until the hour of reckoning arrived. He did not need to. The ride back to the sea was through the fairyland of the morning climb, enhanced a thousandfold, as all fairylands are,

## RIVIERA TOWNS

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by the magic of the twilight. One never can make it up to hired horses for their work and willingness and patience. But we did live up to local American tradition in regard to the *cocher*.

**CAGNES**

**[ 19 ]**







## CHAPTER II

### CAGNES

**A**MERICAN and English visitors to the Riviera soon come to know Cagnes by name. It is a challenge to their ability to pronounce French—a challenge that must be accepted, if you are in the region of Grasse or Nice or Antibes. Two distinct tramway lines and several roads lead from Grasse to Cannes and Cagnes. Unless you are very careful, you may find yourself upon the wrong route. Once on the Cagnes tramway, or well engaged upon the road to Cagnes, when you had meant to go to Cannes, the mistake takes hours to retrieve. At Nice, chauffeurs and *cochers* love to cheat you by the confusion of these two names. You bargain for the long trip to Cannes, and are attracted by the reasonable price quoted. In a very short time you are at Cagnes. The vehicle stops. Impossible to rectify your mispronunciation without a substantial increase of the original sum of the bargain. Antibes is between



## RIVIERA TOWNS

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Cagnes and Cannes. Cagnes is nearer, and it is always to Cannes that you want to go. Spell the name, or write it on a piece of paper, if you are to be sure that you will be taken west instead of east.

The place, as well as the name, is familiar to all travelers—from a distance. Whether you move by train, by tramway or by automobile, you see the city set on a hill between Cannes and Nice. But express trains do not stop. The tramway passes some distance from the old town, and prospect of the walk and climb is not alluring to the tramway tourist, whose goal is places important enough to have a map in Baedeker, or a double-starred church or view. If motorists are not in a hurry to get to a good lunch, their chauffeurs are. You signal to stop, and express a desire to go up into Cagnes. The hired chauffeur declares emphatically that it cannot be done. If you do not believe him, he drives you to the foot of the hill, and you see with your own eyes. Regretfully you pass on to towns that are *plus pratiques*. More than once I had done this: and I might have done it again had not the Artist come to the Riviera.

We were afoot (the best way to travel and see things) on an April Sunday, and stopped for lunch at the restaurant opposite the Cagnes railway station. The Artist was not hungry. While I ate he went out "to find what sort of a subject the *ensemble* of the city on the hill over there makes." He returned in time for cheese and fruit, with a sketch of Cagnes that made the waitress run inside to get better apples and bananas. She insisted

## CAGNES

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that we would be rewarded for a climb up to the old town, and offered to keep our coats and kits.

Along the railway and tramway and motor-road a modern Cagnes of villas and hotels and pensions, with their accompaniment of shops and humbler habitations, has grown for a mile or more, and stretched out across the railway to the sea. Two famous French artists live here, and many Parisians and foreigners. There is also a wireless station. All this shuts off from the road the town on the hill. Unless you had seen it from the open country, before coming into the modern Cagnes, you would not have known that there was a hill and an old city. It was not easy for us to find the way.

Built for legs and nothing else, the thoroughfare up through Cagnes is a street that can be called straight and steep and stiff, the adjectives coming to you without your seeking for alliteration, just as instinctively as you take off your hat and out your handkerchief.

"No livery stable in this town—come five francs on it," said the Artist.

"Against five francs that there are no men with a waistline exceeding forty-five inches!" I answered, feelingly and knowingly.

But we soon became so fascinated by our transition from the twentieth century to the fifteenth that we forgot we were climbing. Effort is a matter of mental attitude. Nothing in the world is hard when you are interested in doing it.

Half way and half an hour up, we paused to take our

## RIVIERA TOWNS

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bearings. The line of houses, each leaning on its next lower neighbor, was broken here by a high garden wall, from which creepers were overhanging the street, with their fresh spring tendrils waving and curling above our heads. There was an odor of honeysuckle and orange-blossoms, and the blood-red branch of a judas-tree pushed its way through the green and yellow. The canyon of the street, widening below us, ended in a rich meadowland, dotted with villas and trees. Beyond, the Mediterranean rose to the horizon. While the Artist was "taking it," the usual crowd gathered around: children whose lack of bashfulness indicated that many city people were here for the season or that tourists did find their way up to Cagnes; women eager to ask how the English felt about the war and how long we thought it was going to last; old men proud to tell you that their city was the most interesting, because the most ancient, on the Riviera.

When we resumed our climb, the whole town seemed to be going our way. Sunday-best and prayer-books gave the reason. Just as we were coming to the top, our street made its first turn, a sharp one, and in the bend was a church tower with a wee door under it. Houses crowded closely around it. The tower was the only indication of the church. An *abbé* was standing by the door, calling in the acolytes and choir boys who were playing tag in the street. The Artist stopped short. I went up to the *abbé*, who by features and accent was evidently a Breton far from home.



**"Beyond, the Mediterranean rose to the horizon"**





## CAGNES

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"Do any fat men live up here?" I asked.

"Only one," he answered promptly, with a hearty laugh. "The *curé* has gone to the war, and last month the bishop sent a man to help me who weighs over a hundred kilos. We have another church below in the new town, and there are services in both, morning and afternoon. Low mass here at six, and high masses there at eight and here at ten. Vespers here at three and there at four-thirty. On the second Sunday my coadjutor said he was going to leave at the end of the month. So, after next week, there will be no fat man. Unless you have come to Cagnes to stay?" The *abbé* twinkled and chuckled.

"It is not to laugh at," broke in an oldest inhabitant who had overheard. "We live from ten to twenty years longer than the people of the plain, who have railways and tramways and carriages and autos right to their very doors. We get the mountain air from the Alps and the sea air from the Mediterranean uncontaminated. It blows into every house without passing through as much as a single neighbor's courtyard. But our long lease on life is due principally to having to climb this hill. Stiffness, rheumatism—we don't know what it means, and we stay fit right to the very end. Look at me. I was a grown man when people first began to know who Garibaldi was in Nice. We formed a corps of volunteers right here in this town when Mazzini's republic was proclaimed to go to defend Rome from the worst enemies of Italian unity, those Vatican—

## RIVIERA TOWNS

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But I beg M. le Curé's pardon! In those days of hot youth the church, you know, did not mean—"

The *abbé* twinkled and chuckled again, and patted the old man's shoulder affectionately. "When you did not follow Briand ten years ago, it proved that half a century had wrought a happy change. I understand anyway. I am a Breton that has taken root, as everyone here does, in this land of lofty mountains and deep valleys, of wind and sun, of sea and snow. Mental as well as physical acclimatization comes. The spirit, the life, the very soul of the *Risorgimento* had nothing Italian in it. It was of Piedmont and Savoy and the Riviera—a product of the Alpes Maritimes."

I would have listened longer. But the bell above us began to ring, several peals first, and then single strokes, each more insistent than the last. The *abbé* was still in the Garibaldi mood, and the volunteer of '49 and I were in sympathy. He knew it, and refused to hear the summons to vespers. But out of the door came a girl who could break a spell of the past, because she was able to weave one of the present. She dominated us immediately. She would not have had to say a word. A hymn book was in her hand, opened at the page where she intended it to stay open. "This afternoon, M. l'Abbé, we shall sing this," she stated.

"No, we cannot do it!" he protested rather feebly. "You see, the encyclical of the Holy Father enjoins the Gregorian, and I think the boys can sing it—"

The organist interrupted: "You certainly know, M.

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l'Abbé, that we cannot have decent singing for the visits to the stations, unless the big girls, whom I have been training now for two months—"

"But we must obey the Papal injunction, Mademoiselle Simone," put in the priest still more mildly.

Mademoiselle Simone's eyes danced mockingly, and her *moue* confirmed beyond a doubt the revelation of clothes and accent. Here was a twentieth-century Parisienne in conflict with a reactionary rule of the church in a setting where turning back the hands of the clock would have seemed the natural thing to do.

"Pure nonsense!" was her disrespectful answer. "With all the young men away, the one thing to do is to make the music go."

I had to speak in order to be noticed. "So even in Cagnes the young girls know how to give orders to M. le Curé? The Holy Father's encyclical—" I could stop without finishing the sentence, for I had succeeded. The dancing eyes and the *moue* now included me.

"M. l'Abbé, it is time for the service," she said firmly. "If this *Anglais* comes in, he will see that I have reason."

She disappeared. The *abbé* looked after her indulgently, shrugged his shoulders, with the palms of his hands spread heavenward, and followed her.

In the meantime the worshipers, practically all of them women and children, had been turning corners above and below. I made the round of the group of buildings, and saw only little doors here and there at different levels. There was no portal, no large main

## RIVIERA TOWNS

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entrance. When I came back to the bend of the road, the music had started. I was about to enter the tower door—Mademoiselle Simone's!—when I saw the Artist put up his pencil. The service would last for some time, so I joined him, and we continued to mount.

Above the church tower, steps led to the very top of the hill, which was crowned by a château. Skirting its walls, we came to an open place. On the side of the hill looking towards the Alps, a spacious terrace had been built out far beyond the château wall. Along the parapet were a number of primitive tables and benches. The tiny café from which they were served was at the end of a group of nondescript buildings that had probably grown up on a ruined bastion of the château. Seated at one of these tables, you see the Mediterranean from Nice to Antibes, with an occasional steamer and a frequent sailing-vessel, the Vintimille *rapide* (noting its speed by the white engine smoke), one tramway climbing by Villeneuve-Loubet towards Grasse and another by Saint-Paul-du-Var to Vence, and more than a semi-circle of the horizon lost in the Alps.

The Sunday afternoon animation in the *place* was wholly masculine. No woman was visible except the white-coiffed grandmother who served the drinks. The war was not the only cause of the necessity of Mademoiselle Simone's opposition to antiphonal Gregorian singing. I fear that the lack of male voices in the vesper service is a chronic one, and that Mademoiselle Simone's attempt to put life into the service would have

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been equally justifiable before the tragic period of *la guerre*. For the men of Cagnes were engrossed in the favorite sport of the Midi, *jeu aux boules*. I have never seen a more serious group of Tartarins. From Monsieur le Maire to cobbler and blacksmith, all were working very hard. A little ball that could be covered in one's fist is thrown out on the common by the winner of the last game. The players line up, each with a handful of larger wooden balls about the size and weight of those that are used in croquet. You try to roll or throw your balls near the little one that serves as goal. Simple, you exclaim. Yes, but not so simple as golf. For the hazard of the ground is changed with each game.

Interest in what people around you are doing is the most compelling interest in the world. Train yourself to be oblivious to your neighbor's actions and your neighbor's thoughts, on the ground that curiosity is the sign of the vulgarian and indifference the sign of the gentleman, and you succeed in making yourself colossally stupid. Here lies the weakest point in Anglo-Saxon culture. The players quickly won me from the view. Watch one man at play, and you can read his character. He is an open book before you. Watch a number of men at play, and you are shown the general masculine traits of human nature. Generosity, decision, alertness, deftness, energy, self-control — meanness, hesitation, slowness, awkwardness, laziness, impatience: you have these characteristics and all the shades between them. The humblest may have admirable and wholesome virtues

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lacking in the highest, but a balance of them all weighs and marks one Monsieur le Maire or the stonebreaker on the road.

The councils of Generals at Verdun were not taking more seriously today the problem of moving their men nearer the fortress than were these players the problem of rolling their big balls near the little ball. Had the older men been the only group, I should have got the idea that *jeu aux boules* is a game where the skill is all in cautious playing. But there were young *chasseurs alpins*, home on leave from the front, who were playing the game in an entirely different way. Instead of making each throw as if the destinies of the world were at stake, the soldiers played fast and vigorously, aiming rather to knock the opponent's ball away from a coveted position near the goal than to reach the goal. The older men's balls, to the number of a couple of dozen, clustered around the goal at the end of a round. Careful marking, by cane-lengths, shoe-lengths and handkerchief-lengths preceded agreement as to the winner. At the end of a round of the *chasseurs alpins*, two or three balls remained: the rest had gone wide of the mark, or had been knocked many feet from the original landing-place by a successor's throw. During half an hour I did not see the young men measure once. The winning throw was every time unmistakable.

The Artist leaned against the château wall, putting it down. The thought of Mademoiselle Simone, playing the organ, came to me. How was the music going? I

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must not miss that service. The view and the château and the *jeu aux boules* no longer held me. Down the steps I went, and entered the first of the church doors. It was on the upper level, and took me into the gallery: I was surprised to find so large a church. One got no idea of its size from the outside.

The daylight was all from above. Although only mid-afternoon, altar and chancel candles made a true vesper atmosphere, and the flickering wicks in the hanging lamps gave starlight. This is as it should be. The appeal of a ritualistic service is to the mystical in one's nature. Jewels and embroideries, gold and silver, gorgeous robes, rich decorations, pomp and splendor repel in broad daylight; candles and lamps sputter futilely; incense nauseates: for the still small voice is stifled, and the kingdom is of this world. But in the twilight, what skeptic, what Puritan resists the call to worship of the Catholic ritual? I had come in time for the intercessory visit to the stations of the cross. Priest and acolytes were following the crucifix from the chancel. Banners waved. Before each station prayers were said for the success of France and for the protection of her soldiers. While the procession was passing from station to station, the girls sang their hymn in French. For the first time since I had been in the Midi, I realized that the shadow under which we live in Paris was here, too. The trenches were not far away!

When the service was over, I went around to the door under the tower. Of course, it was to meet the *abbé*.

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Still, when I realize that I had missed the organist, I was disappointed. The *abbé* soon appeared from the sacristy. I gave one more look around for Mademoiselle Simone while he was explaining that he had just twenty minutes before it was necessary to start down to the other church, but that it was long enough to take me through the Moorish quarter. Although I had come to Cagnes to see the old town, and to get into the atmosphere of past centuries, I must confess that I followed him regretfully.

The houses of the Moorish quarter are built into the ancient city walls. Baked earth, mixed with straw and studded with cobblestones, has defied eight centuries. There are no streets wide enough for carts, for they hark back to the days when donkeys were common carriers. And in hill-towns the progressive knowledge of centuries has evolved no better means of transport. You pass through *ruelles* where outstretched hands can touch the houses on each side. Often the *ruelle* is like a tunnel, for the houses are built right over it on arches, and it is so dark that you cannot see in front of you. The *abbé* assured me that there were house doors all along as in any other passage. People must know by instinct where to turn in to their houses.

When the *abbé* left me to go to his lower vesper service, after having piloted me back to the main streets, I decided to go up again to the *place* to rejoin the Artist. But under an old buttonwood tree, which almost poked its upper branches into the château windows, stood Made-





**"The houses of the Moorish quarter are built into the ancient city walls"**



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moiselle Simone, waving good-by to another girl who was disappearing around the corner of a street above. Her aunt, she declared, was waiting for her at a villa half-way down the hill, at five. Just then five struck in the clock-tower behind us.

"Had you looked up before you spoke?" I asked.

"Clocks do strike conveniently," she answered.

Although Mademoiselle Simone repulsed firmly my plea that she become my guide through the other side of the town, where two outlying quarters, the *abbé* had said, contained the best of all in old houses, queer streets and an ivy-covered ruin of a chapel, she lingered to talk under the buttonwood tree of many things that had nothing to do with Cagnes. When I tried to persuade her to show me what I had not yet seen, on the ground that I had made the climb up to the top because of my interest in hill cities and wanted to write about Cagnes, she immediately answered that she would not detain me for the world and made a move to keep her rendezvous with the aunt. So I hastened to contradict myself, and assure her that I had no interest whatever in Cagnes, that I was stuck here waiting for the Artist, who would come only with the fading light.

After Mademoiselle Simone left me under the buttonwood tree, I thought of the Artist. He had finished and was smoking over a glass of vermouth at one of the tables by the parapet of the *place*.

"Great town," he said. "Bully stuff here. In buildings and villagers have you found anything as fascinat-



**SAINT-PAUL-DU-VAR**





### CHAPTER III

#### SAINT-PAUL-DU-VAR

**A**T the restaurant opposite the Cagnes railway station the waitress welcomed us as old friends. She told us how lucky we were to come on a Friday. Fish just caught that morning—the best we would ever eat in our lives—were waiting for us in the kitchen. We flattered ourselves that the disappointment was mutual when we had to tell her that there was time only for an *apéritif*. Precisely because it was Friday and not Sunday, there was no reasonable hope of running into Monsieur le Curé or Mademoiselle Simone or a game of *boules*, if we climbed the steep hill to Cagnes. On our last visit, we had seen from the top of Cagnes a walled city crowning another hill several miles inland. Saint-Paul-du-Var was our goal today.

Electric trams run to Grasse and to Vence from Cagnes. The lines separate at Villeneuve-Loubet, a mile back from the Nice-Cannes road. The Vence tram

## RIVIERA TOWNS

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would have taken us to Saint-Paul-du-Var along the road that began to avoid the valley after passing Villeneuve-Loubet. It was one of those *routes nationales* of which the France of motorists is so proud, hard and smooth and rounded to drain quickly, never allowing itself a rut or a steep grade or a sharp turn. This national highway was like all the easy paths in life. It meant the shortest distance comfortably possible for obtaining your objective. It eliminated surprises. It showed you all the time all there was to see, and kept you kilometrically informed of your progress. It was paralleled by the electric tram line. It enabled you to explore the country in true city fashion.

We were walking, and the low road, signpostless, attracted us. It started off in the same general direction, but through the valley. It was all that a country road ought to be. It had honest ruts and unattached stones of various sizes. Cows had passed along that way. Trees met overhead irregularly, and bushes grew up in confusion on the sides. The ruthlessness of macadam, the pressure of fat tires, the scorching of engines, had not banished the thick grass which the country wants to give its roads, and would give to all its roads if the country were not being constantly "improved." There were places where one could rest without fear of sun and ditch-water and clouds of dust. Why should one go from the city to the country to breathe tar and gasoline? Why should one have to keep one's eyes wandering from far ahead to back over one's shoulder for



## SAINT-PAUL-DU-VAR

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fifty-two weeks in the year? We wanted to get away from clang-clang and honk-honk and puff-puff. Since the real vacation is change, we welcomed the task of looking out for hostile dogs instead of swiftly moving vehicles. Our noses wanted whiffs of hay and pig, and our boots wanted unadulterated mud.

We were not allowed to have our way without a warning. There always is someone to keep you in the straight and narrow path. As we were turning into the low road a passer-by remonstrated.

"If you are going to Saint-Paul-du-Var," he explained, "you want to keep to the high road. It's very muddy down there, and will take you longer."

When our adviser saw that we did not stop, he raised his voice and called, "There are no signposts and you may get lost."

"You take the high road and we'll take the low," sang back the Artist.

He who had meant well disappeared, shaking his head. No doubt, as he shuffled along, he was muttering to himself over the inexplicable actions of *ces drôles d'Anglais*.

The miles passed coolly and pleasantly. Trees and bushes did not allow many glimpses of the outside world. The dogs that barked were behind farmhouse gates, and we had use for our stones only at an occasional jackrabbit. "At" is a convenient preposition. It gives one latitude. Jackrabbits on the Riviera are not like human products of the south. They jump quickly. They jump, too, in directions that cannot be foretold.

## RIVIERA TOWNS

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After one particularly bad throw, the Artist explained that he did not enjoy inflicting pain. His boyish instincts had long ago been controlled by reading S. P. C. A. literature. I told him that I thought he had given up baseball too early in life. So had I. The jack-rabbits escaped.

I am rarely oblivious to the duty of the noon hour. Although I knew the Artist's habit of stopping suddenly, and the hopelessness of budging him by plea or argument as long as the reason for stopping remained, it had not occurred to me that there would be a risk in taking the low road. We had started in plenty of time, and as we were out for a medieval town, I thought he would not be tempted until we reached the vicinity of a restaurant. But about a mile below Saint-Paul-du-Var the low road brought us to a view of the city that would have held me at any other time than twelve noon. I tried the old expedient of walking faster, and calling attention to something in the distance. When the Artist halted, moved uncertainly a few yards, and stopped again, we were lost. He did not need to pronounce the inevitable words, "I'll just get this little bit." The Artist's "just" means anything from twenty to ninety minutes.

Food without companionship is not enjoyable, least of all on a holiday. There was no use suggesting that we could come back this way, and advancing that the light would be so much better later. The Artist had started in. I cast around for some way of escape from

## SAINT-PAUL-DU-VAR

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an impossible situation. The only farmhouse in sight was at the end of a long lane, and did not look as if it could produce the makings of a meal. The poorest providers and preparers of foodstuffs are their producers. Who has not eaten salt pork on a cattle ranch and longed for cream on a dairy farm? What city boarder has not discovered the woeful lack of connection between the cackling of hens and the certitude of fresh eggs on the table at the next meal? What muncher of Maine doughnuts in a Boston restaurant has not thought of the "sinkers" offered to him when he was on his last summer's vacation?

A bridge crossed a stream just ahead of us. On the other side was a thick clump of trees. I walked forward with the thought that a drink of water at least might not be bad. When I got to the bridge I heard plaintive barking and a man's voice. The man was explaining to the dog why he ought not to be impatient. He would have his good bone, with plenty of meat on it, in a little quarter of an hour. A house-wagon was standing back from the side of the road. The owner was shaking a casserole over a fire, and the dog was sniffing as near as he dared. The dog gave me his attention, and the man turned. It was a favorite waiter of a favorite Montparnasse café.

"Pierre," I cried, "where did you drop from? What luck!"

Pierre put the casserole on the window ledge, out of the dog's reach, and greeted me. You never could sur-

## RIVIERA TOWNS

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prise Pierre. He was always master of the situation. One has to be in a Montparnasse café. I noted with approval the precaution that Pierre had taken. Either the dog was very hungry or there was something particularly tempting in the casserole.

Pierre had gone to join his regiment on the second day of the war. I had not seen him or heard of him for two years. He told me that he had been unable to shake off a *bronchite*, caught in the trenches. It was the old story. When he left the hospital, the medical board declared him unfit for further service and warned him against returning soon to city life. The hope of recovery lay in open air and sunshine.

"I determined to get well, Monsieur," he said. "I had money saved up. I bought this wagon and a cinematograph outfit. I go to the little towns in the Midi. One can take only four sous—two from the children—but I get along. Now, when I am well, I shall not go back to Paris. Have you ever lived in a wagon, Monsieur? No? Well, never do it, if you do not want to realize that it is the only life worth living."

Pierre was interested in the gossip of the Quarter. A frequent "*c'est vrai*" and "*dites donc*" punctuated my news of American artists who had gone home at last. When I told him of the few who had sold pictures in America, his comment was "*épatant*," which he meant in no uncomplimentary sense. The Artist was an old favorite of Pierre's. I restrained his impulse to go right out to greet the Artist. Pierre entered into my



**"The walls rose sheer, and only the outer houses, directly behind the ramparts, were in our line of vision"**



## SAINT-PAUL-DU-VAR

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idea with alacrity. The dog was given a bone and chained. The coal box was brought out from the wagon, and turned upside down for a table beside a fallen tree. When all was ready, I watched Pierre surprise the Artist. He put a napkin over his arm, and froze his face. Then he tip-toed up to the Artist's elbow, and announced, "*Monsieur est servi.*" For once I was able to get the Artist away from his work.

What a meal we did have there beside that little stream! There were bottles in Pierre's wagon, and he insisted upon opening more than one. When we finally left Pierre to his dishes, we were well fortified for the climb to Saint-Paul-du-Var, and in the mood to appreciate enthusiastically all that was before us.

Above on the left we could see the high road that we had deserted at Villeneuve-Loubet. It did not come out of its way for Saint-Paul-du-Var, but went straight on inland Vence-wards. A side road, on the level, came over towards the gate of Saint-Paul-du-Var. To this road ours mounted, and joined it just outside the town. In climbing we had the opportunity, denied to the conventional, of seeing that Saint-Paul-du-Var was really on the top of a hill. The walls rose sheer, and only the outer houses, directly behind the ramparts, were in our line of vision. Nearly up to the entrance to the city we passed between a tiny stone chapel and a mill, whose wheel was a curious combination of metal and wood. The Artist exclaimed that it would make a bully sketch. He saw its picturesque possibilities. I wondered, on the





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other hand, whether it would work and how it worked. Moss and grass on a millwheel in the Midi are no surer signs of abandonment and disuse than a dry millrace. Where things die fast they grow fast. A little water brings forth vegetable life in a single day. Southern streams are not perennial. On the Riviera, they are fed from nearby mountains, and are intermittent even in their season. When the water ceases, the sun quickly bakes a crust of silt and dries the stones of the riverbeds gray-brown.

A dwarf could hardly have said mass in the chapel. Its rear wall was the rising ground, and there seemed to be a garden on the roof. Burial space extending no farther than the roots of a sentinel cypress told the tale of one man's vanity or devotion. The situation of the chapel prompted us to look over the ground for traces of a lunette bastion on the counterscarp. We found that the chapel was built upon an earlier foundation of stone taken from a fortification wall, and that later builders had made over the chapel into a belvedere. Steps on the side of the slope led to the roof, upon which two benches had been placed. What past generations have left us we use for purposes of our own. We talk sentimentally of our traditions, but we test them by their utility.

Saint-Paul-du-Var fails to satisfy twentieth-century standards. It is not a thriving, bustling city. It is not a tourist center. The walls are as they were five centuries ago. The space inside is sufficient for the popula-



## SAINT-PAUL-DU-VAR

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tion, and one gate serves all needs. The medieval aspect is not destroyed by buildings outside the walls, and the medieval atmosphere is undisturbed by hotel touts and postcard vendors. When we presented ourselves before the gate, not a soul was in sight. A bronze cannon of Charles-Quint's time stuck its nose out of the ground by the portcullis. We had to pull off grass and dirt to find the inscription. While we were examining the towers that flanked the gate, a wagon rattled slowly by. The driver did not look at us. A woman with a basket of vegetables on her head met us under the arch. She did not look at us. We found the same indifference in the town. Even the small boys refrained from staring or grinning or yelling or asking for pennies. None volunteered to show us around.

"The interest in our arrival at Saint-Paul-du-Var," commented the Artist, "is all on our side."

Human nature is full of contradictions. We should have been annoyed if people had bothered us. We were as much annoyed when they paid no attention to us.

We went up in one of the towers to reach the ramparts. Keeping on the walls all the way around the town involved an occasional bit of climbing. We had to forget our clothes. That was easy, however, for every step of the way was of compelling interest *extra et intra muros*. Outside, the panorama of the Riviera, sea and mountains, towns and valleys, lay before us to the four points of the compass. Inside, houses of different centuries but none post-Bourbon, each crowding its neighbor

## RIVIERA TOWNS

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but none without individuality of its own, faced us and curved with us. For once, the Artist failed to single out a subject.

Seaward, beyond the valley through which we had come, were Villeneuve-Loubet and Cagnes. On the right we could see to the Antibes lighthouse, and on the left, across the Var, to the point between Nice and Villefranche. Landward were Vence and the wall of the Alpes Maritimes. The afternoon sun fell full on the snow and darkened the upper valleys of the numerous confluent rivers of the Var and Loup.

Sketching was tomorrow's task. There was time only for exploration of the city before sunset. We came down at the tower opposite the one from which we had started on our round. On the road to the electric tram, we saw the *restaurant-hôtel*, a cube of whitewash, but we were far from the temptation of banalities. Tea or something, and a place to spend the night, could be found within the walls.

Saint-Paul-du-Var caught us in its fascinating maze. We forgot that we were thirsty. There was just one street. It zigzagged its way across the town from the gate. You lost the points of the compass and hardly realized that you were going over the top of a hill. The street curved every hundred yards, and frequently turned around three sides of a single building. Fountains were at the bends. One of them, opposite the market, fed a square pool that was the city laundry. Women, kneeling on the edge, were at the eternal task.

## SAINT-PAUL-DU-VAR

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We passed the centers of municipal life, post-office, *mairie*, *gendarmerie*, school and church.

Churches of Riviera towns, like the character and speech and features of the people, are a reminder of the recency of the French occupation. There is a replica of the church of Saint-Paul-du-Var in a thousand Italian cities. When you enter the colorless building from the plain curved porch, the chill strikes right into your bones. Windows do not compete with candles. You have to grope your way toward the altar. Unless you strain your eyes, or lamps are burning, side chapels pass unnoticed. If you are looking for inscriptions or want to admire the old master's picture, with which every church claims to be endowed, you must get the verger with his taper. Altars are gaudily decorated and statues bejeweled and be(artificial)flowered in Hispano-Italian fashion. The *mairie*, reconstructed from an ancient palace or castle, was more interesting. Beside the *mairie* a medieval square tower, which may have been a donjon, was occupied on the ground floor by the *gendarmerie*. Bars on the upper windows indicated that it was still the prison.

We tried the alleys that led off from the street, thinking each might be a thoroughfare to take us back to the ramparts. They ended abruptly in a *cul-de-sac* or court. The *culs-de-sac*, uninviting to eye and nose, were as Italian as the church. The houses in the courts were stables downstairs. Man and beast lived together. Flowers and wee bushes grew up around the wells in

## RIVIERA TOWNS

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the center of the courts. Everything was built of stone and red-tiled. But there was none of the dull gray-and-red monotony of northern towns near the sea or of the sharp gray-and-red monotony of towns of the Mediterranean peninsulas. Grass sprouted out between the stones of the walls and the tiles of the roofs. From window-ledges and eaves hung ferns. A blush of moss on the stones added to the green of plant life, and softened the austerity of the gray. Nature was successful in asserting herself against man and sun and sea.

We were expressing our enthusiasm in a court where the living green combined with age to glorify the buildings. We did not see the dilapidation, we did not smell the dirt, we did not feel the squalor. A woman was lighting a fire in a brazier on her doorstep. She looked hostilely at us. We beamed in counteraction. She looked more hostilely. As the Artist wanted to sketch her house, some words seemed necessary. I detailed our emotions. Was not her lot, cast in this picturesque spot, most enviable?

"We want to take away with us," I said, "a tangible memory of this beautiful, this picturesque, this verdant court in which you live."

"If you had to live here," she announced simply, "you'd want to go away and forget it."

The fumes had burned from the charcoal. The woman picked up the brazier, carried it inside without another word or look, and slammed the door behind her with her foot.



"The houses in the courts were stables downstairs"



## SAINT-PAUL-DU-VAR

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The Artist was already in his sketch, but he paused to growl and philosophize. "If she had waited a minute longer," he complained, "I should have had her and the brazier. Funny how unappreciative people are. You and I, *mon vieux*, would like nothing better than to stay here. From the other side of her house that woman must have a great view of the sea and the mountains. Is she going to watch the sunset? No, she is going to make soup for her man on that brazier in a dark hole of a room, and feel sorry for herself because she doesn't live in Paris where she could go to the movies every night."

Our ardor for Saint-Paul-du-Var lasted splendidly through the sunset on the ramparts. We had found the ideal spot. Hoi polloi could have their Nice and their Cannes! But when night fell, there were few lights on the street, and shopkeepers looked at us in stupid amazement when we inquired about lodgings. We did not dare to ask in the drinking places, for fear they might volunteer to put us up. In the *épiceries*, we were offered bread and sardines. There was no butter. So we went rather less reluctantly than we had thought possible an hour earlier out of the gate towards the *hôtel-restaurant*. An old man was camped against the wall in a wagon like Pierre's. He had been sharpening Saint-Paul-du-Var's scissors and knives. We confided in him, and asked if he thought the *hôtel-restaurant* would give us a good dinner and a good bed. The scissors-grinder wrinkled his nose and twinkled his eyes.

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"The last tram from Vence to Cagnes stops over there at eight-ten," he said decisively. "You have five minutes to catch it. Get off at Villeneuve-Loubet, and go to the Hôtel Beau-Site. The proprietor is a *cordons bleu* of a *chef*. He has his own trout, and he knows just what tourists like to eat and drink. Motorists stop there over night, so you need have no fear."

"But—" I started to remonstrate.

The Artist was already hurrying in the direction of the tram. I followed him.

The next morning the Artist went back to Saint-Paul-du-Var for his sketches. I did not accompany him. Saint-Paul-du-Var was a delightful memory, and I wanted to keep it.



**VILLENEUVE-LOUBET**

**[ 53 ]**





## CHAPTER IV

### VILLENEUVE-LOUBET

**O**N a hill a mile or so back from the Cannes-Nice road, just before one reaches Cagnes, a castle of unusual size and severity of outline rises above the trees of a park. The roads from Cagnes to Grasse and Vence bifurcate at the foot of the hill on which the castle is built. What one thinks of the castle depends upon which road one takes. The traveler on the Vence road sees a pretentious entrance, constructed for automobiles, with a twentieth-century iron gate and a twentieth-century porter's lodge. The park looks well groomed. The wall along the Vence side is as new as the gate and the lodge. The stone of the castle is white and fresh. One dismisses the castle as an imitation or a wholesale restoration by an architect lacking in imagination and cleverness. But if the left hand road toward Grasse is taken, one sees twelfth-century fortifications coming

## RIVIERA TOWNS

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down from the top of the hill to the roadside. There are ruins of bastions and towers overgrown with bushes and ivy. Farther along an old town is revealed climbing the hill to the castle. There is nothing *nouveau riche* about Villeneuve-Loubet. The only touches of the modern are the motor road with kilometer stones, the iron bridge over the Loup, and the huge sign informing you that the hotel is near by.

Had we limited our inland exploration to the Vence side of the hill, the Artist and I would not have discovered Villeneuve-Loubet. Had we been hurrying through toward Grasse in automobile or tram, we would probably have exclaimed "how picturesque" or "interesting, isn't it?" and continued our way. Luck saved us.

A scissors-grinder at the gate of Saint-Paul-du-Var recommended the trout and beds of the Villeneuve-Loubet hotel. Just as the moon was coming up one April evening, we got off the Vence-Cagnes tram at the junction of the Grasse tramway, and walked to the revelation of what the castle really was. We decided to eat something in a hurry, and go around the town that very evening.

When, helped by the sign, we reached the Hôtel Beau-Site, the proprietor came forward with his best shuffle and bow. Trout? Of course there were trout, plenty of them. Alas, in these days of war, which meant scarcity of gasoline and bothersome *sauf-conduits* and suppression of express trains, there were too many trout.



"A castle of unusual size and severity of outline rises above the trees of a park"



## VILLENEUVE-LOUBET

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But that was to the advantage of *messieurs*. He, Jean Alphonse, could give a large choice, and the dinner would have all his attention. It was his pride and rule to give personal attention always to every dish that left his kitchen, but with the *monde* of a regular season, he could not take every fish out of the pan himself, and see that the slices of lemon were cut, and the parsley put, just as he had always done when he was the *chef* of Monsieur Blanc. We knew Monsieur Blanc. Monsieur Blanc died eight years ago, but that was the way of the world. Now *messieurs* could go right along with him and pick out their own fish. The net was down by the pool, and he would get a lamp in just one little minute. For that would be best. The moon was coming up, true. But one could not trust the moonlight in choosing fish.

The garden of the Hôtel Beau-Site contains a curious succession of bowers made by training bamboo trees for partitions and ceilings. As we went through them, Jean Alphonse explained that these natural *salons particuliers*, where parties could have luncheon out-of-doors and yet remain sheltered from the sun and in privacy, combined with the trout to give his hotel a wonderful vogue in tourist season. We, of course, insisted that the reputation of the chef must be the third and controlling attraction. The pool was full, and the trout had no chance. It was not a sporting proposition; but just before dinner one does not think of that. Even our choice out of the net was gently guided by Jean Alphonse. Since human nature is the same the world over, is it surprising

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that the tricks calculated to captivate and deceive are the same? I recalled a famous restaurant in Moscow, where one goes to the fountain with a white-robed Tartar waiter and thinks he picks out his fish. I have no doubt that Jean Alphonse believed that his idea was original, and that we were experiencing a new sensation.

Jean Alphonse did not boast idly of his cuisine. He possessed, too, the genius of the successful boniface for knowing what would please his guests. He sensed our lack of interest in the wines of the Midi, and, helped by the Artist's checked knickers and slender cane, set forth a bottle of old Scotch. We refused to allow him to open the dining-room for us, and had our dinner in a corner of the café. Villeneuve-Loubet's *élite* gathered to see us eat. The *garde-champêtre*, the veteran of 1870, the chatelain's bailiff, the local representative in the Legion of Honor (rosette, not ribbon, if you please), and two *chasseurs alpins*, home from the Vosges front on sick leave, ordered their coffee or liqueur at other tables, but were glad to join us when we said the word. Soon we had a dozen around us. The history of the war—and past and future wars—and of Villeneuve-Loubet was set forth in detail.

Had it not been for the moon, we should certainly have gone from the table to our rooms. But the full moon on the Riviera makes a more fascinating fairyland than one can find in dreams. We did not hesitate, when the last of our friends left, to follow them out-of-doors. Villeneuve-Loubet might prove to be a modest town to-



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## VILLENEUVE-LOUBET

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morrow, old, of course, and interesting: but we were going to see it tonight under the spell of the moon. We were going to wander where we willed, with all the town to ourselves. We were going to live for an hour in the Middle Ages. For if there was anything modern in Villeneuve-Loubet, the moonlight would hide it or gloss it over; if there was anything ancient, the moonlight would enable us to see it as we wanted to see it. I pity the limited souls who do not believe in moonshine, and use the word contemptuously. One is illogical who contends that moonshine gives a false idea of things; for he is testing the moonshine impression by sunshine. It would be as illogical to say that sunshine gives a false idea of things on the ground that moonshine is the standard. If sunshine is reality, so is moonshine. The difference is that we are more accustomed to see things by sunlight than by moonlight. Our test of reality is familiarity, and of truth repetition.

Villeneuve-Loubet is built against a cliff. The houses rise on tiers of stone terraces. They are made of stone quarried on the spot. Red tiles, the conspicuous feature of Mediterranean cities, are lacking in Villeneuve-Loubet. The roofs are slabs of stone. The streets are the surface of the cliff. We climbed toward the castle through a ghost-city. The moon enhanced the gray-whiteness that was the common color of ground, walls and roofs. The shadows, sharp and black, were needed to set forth the lines of the buildings.

The picture called for a witch. The silence was

## RIVIERA TOWNS

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broken by the tapping of a cane. Around the corner the witch hobbled into the scene, testing each step before her. She was dressed in black, of course, and bent over with just the curve of the back the Artist loves to give to his old women. She was a friendly soul, and did not seem amazed to find strangers strolling late at night in her town. We were "*Anglais*," and that was explanation enough to one who had seen three generations of tourists. She stopped to talk about the war. Did we think the Germans were going to be beaten this year, or were they strong, as in *Soixante-dix*? Were the English in earnest about their millions of soldiers, and would they raise an army like that of France? France could not carry the burden alone. Fifty-one had gone from Villeneuve-Loubet, and half were dead or prisoners in Germany. What was our impression of her country? We knew that she meant by "country" not France but Villeneuve-Loubet, and mustered our best vocabulary to admire the town, the solid foundations, the houses, the protecting castle, and above all, the unique streets of stone.

"But it must be very difficult to go up and down in winter. How do you manage when the rock is frozen over with snow and ice?" I asked.

"It does not freeze here," she answered.

The moon-whiteness had made me think of winter, and it had not occurred to me that there would be no snow and ice. Ideas are pervasive. We place them immediately and unquestioningly upon the hypothesis that happens to fit.



**"Villeneuve-Loubet is built against a cliff. The houses rise on tiers of stone terraces"**



## VILLENEUVE-LOUBET

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The church, of eighteenth-century architecture, is the last building at the upper end of the town. It stands on a terrace outside the lower wall of the castle, an eloquent witness of the survival of feudal ideas. In order that the lord of the manor need not go far to mass, when there happened to be no private chaplain in the castle, the town-folk must climb to their devotions. I tried the church door from habit. It was not locked. The Artist refused to go in.

"Why should one poke around a church, especially at night and this night?" he remonstrated, and walked over to the wall of the terrace.

"There may be something inside," I urged.

"There *is* something outside," he answered, with his back turned upon the castle as well as church.

I could see my way around, for the windows of nave and transept were large, and had plain glass. Moonlight was sufficient to read inscriptions that set forth in detail the pedigree of the chatelains. The baptismal names overflowed a line, and were followed by a family name almost as long, MARCH-TRIPOLY DE PANISSE-PASSIS. Longest of all was the list of titles. The chatelains were marquesses and counts and knights of Malta and seigneurs of a dozen domains of the northlands as well as of Provence. March-Tripoly and some of the seigneurial names told the story that I have often read in church inscriptions near the sea in Italy, in Hungary, in Dalmatia and in Greece, as well as in Provence and Catalonia. The feudal families of the

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Mediterranean are of Teutonic and Scandinavian origin. They were founded by the stock that destroyed the Roman Empire, barbarians, stronger, more energetic, more resourceful, more resolute than the southerners whom they made their serfs. When feudalism, through the formation of larger political units by the extension of kingly rights, began to decline, the chatelains preserved their prestige by supporting the propaganda to redeem the Holy Sepulcher. They took the Cross and went to fight the Saracens in Africa and Asia. When climate rather than culture latinized them, later northmen came and dispossessed them. The men of the north have always been fighting their way to the Mediterranean. Are Germans and Russians disturbing the peace of Europe any more or any differently than Northern Europeans have always done? Since the dawn of history, the Mediterranean races have had to contend with the men of the north seeking the sun.

Behind the church, ruins of centuries, overgrown with shrubbery and ivy, cling to the side of the cliff from the castle to the valley road. The great square mass of the castle rises on top of a slope far above the church terrace. A moat, filled with bushes, is on a level with the terrace, and beyond the moat is a wall. An unkept path leads through the moat to a modest door. From the towers and arch above one can see that the former entrance to the castle, by means of a portcullis, was on this side. But the outer wall has been rebuilt, leaving only a servants' door. Evidently the chatelain used to enter by

## VILLENEUVE-LOUBET

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climbing up through Villeneuve-Loubet as we had done. Since the motor road was made on the other side of the hill, he and his guests can ignore Villeneuve-Loubet.

The Artist was sitting on the wall of the terrace, engrossed in midnight labor. He was willing to stop for a pipe. Above us the castle, dominated by a pentagonal tower, rose toward the moon. Below us, the blanched roofs of Villeneuve-Loubet slanted into the valley. As long as the pipe lasted, I was able to talk to the Artist about the men of the north seeking the sun. But when the bowl ceased to respond to matches, he said: "All very well, but I know one man of the north who is going to seek his bed."

Before reaching the Hôtel Beau-Site, however, a street on the left attracted us. It seemed to end in a flight of steps that dipped under arches, and we could hear the swift rush of water. We were not so sleepy as we thought, for both of us were still willing to explore. The steps led to the flour mill. We followed the mill-race until we reached the Grasse tram road near the river. By the tram station, a light was shining from the open door of a café in a wooden shanty. We went in, and found Villeneuve-Loubet's officer of the Legion of Honor smoking his pipe over a cup of *tilleul*.

"There has been an accident in the gorge of the Loup," he said. "The last tram from Grasse was derailed, and two automobiles from Cagnes went up an hour ago. As I am the *maire*, I must wait for news. There may be something for me to do."

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Monsieur le Maire told us that he had spent his life in the West African coast trade, with headquarters in Marseilles. If he had stayed there to end his days, he would have been one of a hundred thousand in a great city, cast aside and ignored by the new generation. But in his native *pays* he was in the thick of things. To return to their old home is not wholly a question of sentiment with Frenchmen who retire from business in the city or the colonies. Money goes farther, and one can be an official, with public duties and honors, and enjoy the privilege of writing on notepaper bearing the magic heading, *République Française*. Monsieur le Maire told us that the chatelain came often, and never forgot to invite him to meet the guests at the castle. Some years ago I used to think that it was a peculiar characteristic of the French to enjoy being made much of and exercising authority. But since I have traveled in my own and many other countries I have come to realize that this characteristic is not peculiarly French.

When Monsieur le Maire spoke of the chatelain, I had my opening. Full of the idea of the men of the north seeking the sun, I was ready to spread to others the impression I had made upon myself of my own erudition and cleverness. At the risk of boring the Artist, I repeated and enlarged upon my deductions from the inscription of the March-Tripoly de Panisse-Passis. Monsieur le Maire looked at me with malicious amazement.

"*La-la-la!*" he cried. "Not so fast. You haven't got it right at all, at all, at all! The castle of Villeneuve-



## VILLENEUVE-LOUBET

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Loubet is the only one in this corner of Provence that belongs to its pre-Revolutionary owners, but there are many centuries between feudal days and our time. Castles remain, but history changes. The March-Tripoly de Panisse-Passis are not a feudal family, and they do not come from the north. The African part of the name is due to an unproven claim of descent from a French consular official in Tripoli of the sixteenth century. The château, after a succession of proprietors, came to the Panisse family through marriage with the daughter of a Marseilles notary, who got the château by foreclosing a mortgage. During the Revolutionary period, the property was saved from confiscation by a clever straddle. The owner stayed in France, and supported the Revolution, while the son emigrated with the Bourbons. The peerage was created just a hundred years ago by Louis XVIII, in reward for the refusal of the Panisses to follow Napoleon a second time after the return from Elba."

Another pervasive idea!

"The Moon got you," was the laughing comment of the Artist.

Historical reminiscences died hard, however. We discussed the possible Saracen origin of the pentagonal tower, and the vicissitudes of the castle during the struggles between Mohammedans and Christians, feudal lords and kings, Catholics and Protestants, Spaniards and French. Monsieur le Maire was a Bonapartist, and he insisted that the chief glory of Villeneuve-Loubet was the association with Napoleon.

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“When Napoleon was living at Nice,” he said, “he used to come out here often. Napoleon thought that the view of sea and mountains from Villeneuve-Loubet was the finest on the Riviera. He could stand up there and look out towards his native island, and contemplate the mountains the crossing of which was his first great step to fame. Napoleon (and here Monsieur le Maire winked at the Artist) was a man of the sun seeking the north—just like Cæsar, ho! ho!”

The arrival of the tram, which had recovered its equilibrium, helped me to recover mine. We said good night to Monsieur le Maire, and before turning in went out on the iron bridge that spanned the Loup.

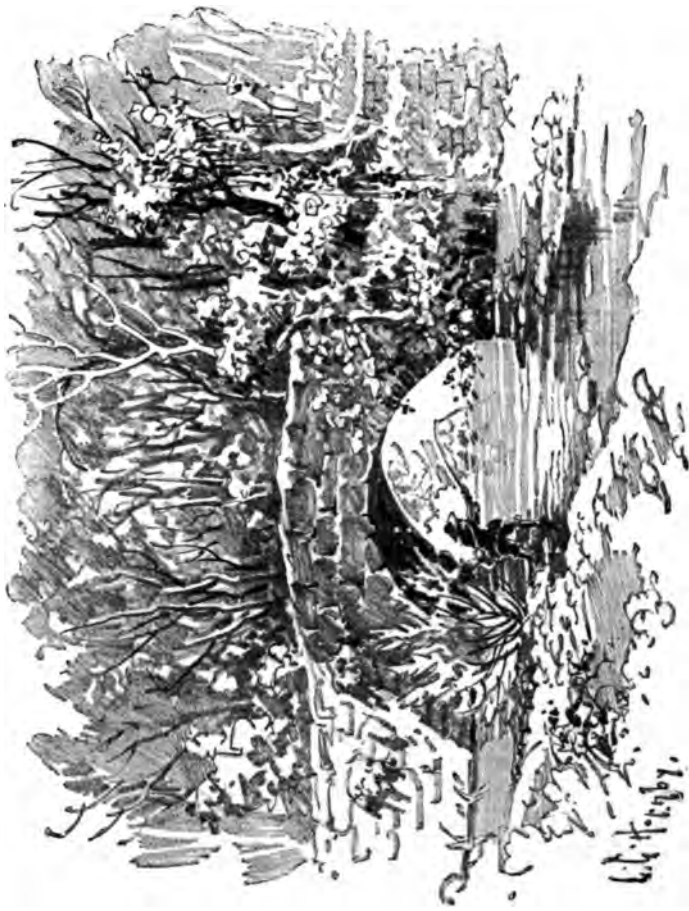
The river, swollen by the spring thaw and rains, had overflowed its banks, and was swirling around willows and poplars. It was not deep, and the water flashed in the moonlight as it rippled over the stones. There was a smell of fresh-cut logs. We looked beyond a saw-mill into a gorge of pines that ended in a transversal white mountain wall.

“Bully placer ground!” I exclaimed.

The Artist leaned over the bridge, looked down, and sighed just one word, “Salmon!”

We sought the Hôtel Beau-Site in silence.

Monuments of men’s making create a diversity of atmospheres and call forth a diversity of reminiscences. They cause imagination to run riot in history. But nature is the same the world over, and there would be reactions and yearnings if one knew nothing of the past



"The river was swirling around willows and poplars"



## VILLENEUVE-LOUBET

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from books. There is no conflict. Nature transcends.  
We dreamed that night not of crusaders, but of Idaho  
and the Bitter Root Range.



**VENCE**

**[69]**







## CHAPTER V

### VENCE

**T**HE most picturesque bit of mountain railway on the Riviera is the fourteen miles from Grasse to Vence. Yielding to a sudden impulse, we took it one afternoon. The train passed from Grasse through olive groves and fig orchards and over two viaducts. A third viaduct of eleven arches took us across the Loup. We were just at the season when the melting snows made a roaring torrent of what was most of the year a little stream lost in a wide gravel bed. The view up the gorge gave us the feeling of being in the heart of the mountains. And yet from the opposite windows of the train we could see the Mediterranean. Then we circled the little town of Tourettes at the foot of the Puy de Tourettes, with high cliffs in the background, and a wild luxurious growth of aloes below. We almost circled the village, crossing the ravines on either side on viaducts. A sixth long viaduct brought us to Vence. We had a rendezvous that evening at Cannes. There was no time to stop. We kept on to Nice to make the only connection that would get us back to Cannes.

## RIVIERA TOWNS

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Afterwards the Artist and I spoke often of Vence. Twice we planned to go to Vence, but found the fascination of Villeneuve-Loubet and Saint-Paul-du-Var justifiable deterrents.

On the terrace of our favorite café in the Allées de la Liberté at Cannes on Easter evening we announced the intention of making a special trip to Vence the next day.

"Tomorrow is Easter Monday, and the children have no school," said the Artist's hostess. "We shall make a family party of it, train to Cagnes where I may have a chance to see your Mademoiselle Simone, a trout luncheon at Villeneuve-Loubet with the rest of that bottle of which you boys spoke, and Vence in the afternoon."

The orders had been given. There was an early morning stir at the Villa Etoile, a scramble to the Théoule railway station, and before nine o'clock we were all aboard for the hour's ride to Cagnes. When we got off the train, there was just one *cocher* available. He looked at papa and mamma and Uncle Lester and the four babies and their nurse, and raised his hands to heaven. But Villeneuve-Loubet was not far off and we were careful to say nothing of the afternoon's program. Léonie and the children were packed into the carriage. The rest of us followed afoot.

Our cheerful host at Villeneuve-Loubet greeted us effusively. He had many holiday guests, but he remembered the Artist and me, and the splendid profit accruing from every drink out of the bottle only *les Anglais* called for. There were plenty of trout, fresh sliced cucumbers,

## VENCE

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and a special soup for the kiddies. The *cocher* was so amenable to Léonie's charms and to drinks that cost less than ours that he consented to further exertion for his horse. But the climb to Vence was out of the question—a physical impossibility, he declared. And we, having seen the horse at rest and in action, could only sorrowfully agree. It was too much of a job to maneuver all the children (the baby could not walk) to the tramway halt, nearly a mile away, and on and off the cars. The mother said that she could not be a good sport to the point of abandoning all her handicaps for several hours in a place where the river flowed fast and deep. So it was agreed that she would have at least the excursion to Saint-Paul-du-Var, and the Artist and I, determined this time on Vence, would see her the next evening for dinner at Cannes.

So we made our adieux, and hurried off to get the tram at the bifurcation below the castle. Half an hour later our tram passed the carriage jogging up the hill. As luck had it, we turned out just then on a switch to let the down car pass. The temptation of Vence was too much for Helen. The *cocher* seemed a fatherly sort of a man. There was a quick consultation from tram to carriage. A reunion with the handicaps was set for two hours later in front of the triple gate of Saint-Paul-du-Var, and another passenger got on the tram.

Around a curve we waved farewell to our children. After all, Vence was only three miles beyond Saint-Paul. As we passed the Saint-Paul halt, our old friend, the

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postman, was on the platform to receive the mailbag. We told him that the kiddies were coming, and slipped him ten francs to look after them until our return.

"*Soyez tranquilles, M'sieu-dame,*" he reassured us. "*Moi, je suis grand'père.*"

Beyond Saint-Paul the tramway left the road and climbed over a viaduct to Vence.

Ventium Cæsaris was a military base of great importance in the days of imperial Rome. It was the central commissariat depot for the armies in Gaul, and had a forum and temples. During the Middle Ages it was a stronghold of the Holy Roman Empire. It stands on the side of a fertile hill more than a thousand feet above the sea. The site was probably chosen because of the wall of rocks on the north which shelter it from the mistral, a wind that the Romans found as little to their liking as later interlopers. In peace as in war the outside world has never been able to keep away from the Riviera.

The Artist announced his intention of spending a couple of days sketching, and left us to seek a hotel. Helen and I found that there was no tram to Saint-Paul-du-Var that would enable us to pick up the children in time for the train to Théoule unless we returned without seeing Vence. So we decided to give an hour to the town and walk back to Saint-Paul.

As at Grasse a boulevard runs along the line of the old fortifications. Some of the houses facing it have used the town wall for foundations or are themselves remnants of the wall. But at Vence the *boulevard de*



**"Down the broad road of red shale past meadows thick with violets"**



## VENCE

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*l'enceinte* is circular—a modest *Ringstrasse*, marking without interruption the old town from the new. We dipped in and out of alleys under arches, and made a turn of the streets of the old town. Much of the medieval still survives in Vence, as in other hill towns of the Riviera. But only behind the cathedral did we find a remnant of imperial Rome. A granite column supporting an arch, and reliefs and inscriptions built in the north wall of the cathedral, are all that we saw of Vence's latinity.

The cathedral, however, is the most interesting we found on the Riviera. It is a Romanesque building, built on the site of the second-century temple, and its tall battlemented tower harks back to a tenth-century *château fort*. The interior is striking: double aisles, simple nave with tiers of arches of the tenth century, a choir with richly carved oak stalls, a fourth-century sarcophagus for altar, and a font and lectern of the Italian Renaissance.

It was just a glimpse. But sometimes glimpses make more vivid memories than longer acquaintance. At the end of our hour we left Vence and hurried down the broad road of red shale past meadows thick with violets. We went through the deep pine-filled ravine over which we had crossed on the viaduct. Then the climb to Saint-Paul-du-Var.

We might have taken our time. Christine and Lloyd and Mimi came running to greet us, bringing with them little friends who had probably never before played with

## RIVIERA TOWNS

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children from Paris. We did not need to ask what kind of a time they had been having. Children are the true cosmopolitans. Hope lay under a tree on her blanket playing with her pink shoes. Nearby, at a table in front of the Café de la Porte, Léonie was treating the *cocher* and the postman to a glass of beer.

"I got bread and honey and milk for the children's *gôûter*," explained Léonie, "and *Monsieur le cocher* and I are having ours with *Monsieur le facteur*."

As the children did not seem to be tired and the *cocher* was in no hurry, Helen and I made a tour of the walls, and took a photograph of our handicaps and their faithful attendants in front of the great gate built by Francis I, who prized Saint-Paul-du-Var as the best spot to guard the fords of the river against Charles V.

A reader of this manuscript declares that the chapter on Vence ought to be struck out.

"They [I suppose she means the home folks] will never understand," she insists.

I am adamant.

"When they come to the Riviera, they will understand," I answer.

Between Saint-Raphaël and Menton the most sacred responsibilities do not weigh one down all the time.



**MENTON**

**[77]**





## CHAPTER VI

### MENTON

**I**N architectural parlance the cornice is the horizontal molded projection crowning a building, especially the uppermost member of the entablature of an order, surmounting the frieze. The word is also used in mountaineering to describe an overhanging mass of hardened snow at the edge of a precipice. In the Maritime Alps it has a striking figurative meaning. There are four *corniches*—the main roads along the two sections of the Riviera, Menton to Nice and Théoule to Saint-Raphaël, where the mountains come right down to the sea and nature affords no natural routes. The Grande Corniche and the Petite Corniche run from Nice to Menton, and the Moyenne Corniche from Nice to Monte Carlo. The Corniche d'Or or Corniche de l'Estérel is the new road from Théoule to Saint-Raphaël. The word is incorrectly used, for the most part, concerning the two coast roads, the Petite Corniche and the Corniche l'Estérel.

## RIVIERA TOWNS

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For although these beautiful roads do at many points stand high above the sea, they descend as often as possible to connect with the coast towns. But the analogy with the architectural term is perfect in so far as the Grande Corniche and the Moyenne Corniche are concerned. At every point these wonderful roads, undisturbed by tramways and unbroken by towns (except La Turbie on the Grande Corniche and Éze on the Moyenne Corniche), you feel that you are traveling along a horizontal molded projection above temples built with hands and the activities of humankind.

From Nice to the Italian frontier the railway, darting in and out of tunnels, keeps near sea level. A small branch climbs from Monte Carlo to La Turbie. The tramway from Nice to Menton follows the Petite Corniche, with a branch to Saint-Jean on Cap Ferrat.

For tourists, Nice is the center of the Riviera, the place to come back to every night after day excursions. Everything is so near that this is possible. Nice is the terminus of railways and tramways east and west. It is the home of the ubiquitous Cook. You can buy all sorts of excursion tickets, and by watching the bulletin posted in front of the Cook office on the Promenade des Anglais, it is possible to "cover" the Riviera in a fortnight. But this means a constant rush, perched on a high seat, crowded in with twenty others, on a *char à bancs*, and only a kaleidoscopic vision of Mediterranean blue, hillside and valley green and brown, roof-top red, wall gray and mountain white. At the end of your orgy,



**"Ancient Éze is on a lower hill midway between you and the  
Mediterranean"**



## MENTON

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instead of distinct pictures, you carry away an impression of the Riviera in which the Place Masséna is a concrete image and the rest no more than dancing bits of colored glass. Saint-Raphaël and Menton are the luncheon breaks of two days, and the Grande Corniche is a beautiful vague mountain road over which you whizzed.

And yet there are those who go to the Riviera every year for a daily ride over the Grande Corniche, and who dream during ten months of two months at Menton!

Sitting with our legs dangling over the stone coping at the entrance of the port in Nice, the Artist and I figured out—on the basis of just time for a glimpse and a few sketches—how long it would take us to wander through the Riviera. Reserving March and April each year, we discovered that the allotted three score and ten, seeing that we had already come to half the span, would be inadequate. And there were other parts of the world! So we decided to see what we could, eschew the “day excursions,” draw on the memories of former years, and let it go at that. Grande Corniche and Moyenne Corniche would be explored afoot on sunny days and gray; shelter would be sought at Menton; and on the return to Nice, Monte Carlo and Villefranche would be the only tramway stops for us.

To Ventimiglia, as if he foresaw what part of the Riviera would eventually fall to France, Napoleon I was the builder of La Grande Corniche. His engineers, planning for horse-drawn vehicles in an age when time was not money, made the ascent easy by striking inland for

## RIVIERA TOWNS

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several kilometers up from the valley of the Paillon and circling Mont Gros and Mont Vinaigrier. For the first two miles you have Nice and Cimiez below you. Then the road turns, passes the observatory of Bischoffsheim (who won posthumous fame by his having built the house where Wilson lost the battle of Paris in 1919), and goes over the Col des Quatre Chemins. Here begins the matchless succession of views of the loveliest portion of the Riviera coast. Below you is the harbor of Villefranche, between Montboron, which hides Nice, and Cap Ferrat jutting far into the sea with Cap de l'Hospice breaking out to the left. The sea is always on your right as you continue to climb. Ancient Eze is on a lower hill midway between you and the Mediterranean. If you have made an early start from Nice, La Turbie will come most conveniently in sight a little before noon.

The only town of the Grande Corniche high up from the sea is on the line given in ancient maps as the frontier between Gaul and Italy, and it is evident that the Roman road followed here the route chosen by Napoleon. For here the Senate raised the *trophaeum Augusti* to commemorate the subjugation of the Gauls and the new era of tranquillity from invasion for the Empire. On its site one of the most interesting medieval towers in southern France was the ruin par excellence of the Riviera until a few years ago. It is now "restored" so well that it leaves nothing to the imagination—a crime quite in keeping with the spirit of the new age of the "movies." Its architect wanted you to see at a glance just what it



## MENTON

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used to be. You feel that he would have put arms on the Venus de Milo! As we stood there, a guide came up and began to tell us the history of the tower. We moved over to the terrace. From Montboron to Bordighera the Riviera lay below us, a panorama which commanded silence. Up came the guide fellow, and started to name each place.

"I am about to commit murder," I cried.

"I'll save you the bother by telling him to chase himself with this franc," said the Artist, pulling out the coin. "If only the restorer of the Tower of Augustus were around, he'd come in for a franc too."

La Turbie is not a town to hurry away from after lunch. Its old gateways and leaning houses brought out the Artist's pencil. I tried to explore the paths up the Tête du Chien. *Défense de pénétrer*—and then selections from the Code about how spies are treated. The same fate met me on the Mont de la Bataille. France may love Italy just now—but she is taking no chances! As far as I could judge, every high slope was fortified. I had tea at one of the hotels perched above the town, counted my money, and suggested to the Artist that we slip down to Monte Carlo for the night.

The next morning we took the little railway back to La Turbie and continued our walk. From La Turbie the Grande Corniche makes a gradual descent behind the principality of Monaco to Cabbé-Roquebrune, and joins the Petite Corniche at Cap Martin. Three miles farther on the Promenade du Midi leads into Menton. This is

## RIVIERA TOWNS

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the most beautiful stretch of the Grande Corniche; and it is paralleled by no other road, as the new Moyenne Corniche ends at Monte Carlo. The view is before you as you go down. The vegetation becomes more tropical. You are nearer the sea, and the feeling of *dolce far niente* gets into your bones as you approach Cap Martin.

Mont Agel's limestone side gives you back the heat of the sun. It is a radiator. No wonder lemons flower all the year round, and you discover on the same tree buds, flowers, green and yellow fruit. No wonder the palms are not out of their setting as at Cannes and Nice. Locusts, flourishing where there is seemingly no ground to take root in, live from the air, and give forth pods that almost hide the leaves in their profusion. The undergrowth of myrtle and dwarf ilex above becomes aloes and sarsaparilla and wild asparagus as we go down to the sea. We have left the cypresses and cork-trees, and eucalyptus struggles in our nostrils with orange and lemon. Even the ferns are scented! The Artist looks with apathetic eye on the rocks and ruined castle of Roquebrune. When we reach Menton we are willing to sink into cane-seated rockers on the Hôtel Bristol porch, call for something in a tall glass with ice in it, and let the morning walk count for a day's journey.

The tourists who know Menton only as a mid-day luncheon break have robbed themselves of an experience that no other Riviera town offers. The Promenade des Anglais at Nice is interesting in the sense that the Avenue des Champs-Élysées is interesting. The Mediter-



**"La Turbie is not a town to hurry away from after lunch. Its leaning houses brought out the Artist's pencil"**



## MENTON

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ranean is accidental—an unimportant accessory. The Promenade du Midi at Menton is another world. And this other world, with its other world climate, reveals itself to you with increasingly keen delight, as you ride (you do not walk at Menton) around Cap Martin, up the mountain to old Sainte-Agnès, in the gorge of Saint-Louis, along the Boulevard du Garavan, and out to the Giardino Hanbury. You say *giardino* instead of *jardin* because Mortola is just across the Italian frontier. The eccentric Englishman chose this spot, without regard to political sovereignty present or future, as the best place to demonstrate the catholicity of the Riviera climate to tropical flora. I simply mention these drives; for you do not ride at Menton any more than you walk. The man who wants to keep his energy and work on the Riviera must not go farther east than Nice.

But why another world? And another world even from that of the rest of the French Riviera? It is partly the climate and the consequent flora, but mostly the light. The general aridity of the Riviera, with the prevalence of everbrowns and evergreens, strikes unpleasantly at first the visitor from the North. Sunshine and riotous colors of flowers and blossoming trees do not make up for the absence of water-fed green. When it rains, the Northerner's depression cannot be fought off. The chill gets to his soul as well as to his bones. He prays for the sun he has come south to seek. But when the sun returns, the dust annoys him. The high wind gets on his nerves.

## RIVIERA TOWNS

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The casual tourist, whose stay is brief, even if he has come in the most favorable season, is "not so sure about the Riviera, you know." He is impatient with himself because, after the first vivid impression, panoramas and landscapes leave him unsatisfied. There is no compensation for the absence of water-fed green in the canvas of nature *until one becomes responsive to other colors*. I do not mean particular patches of color in flowers and blossoms. These are of a season. Often they pass in a week. The sun that gives rich life kills quickly. The glory of south lands, especially along the sea, is the constant changing of colors. These colors you will drink in only when by familiarity you have become sensitive to lights and shadows.

If you stay long enough at a place like Menton you will be ready for Southern Italy and Greece. You will be able to drink in the beauty of landscapes without foliage. And when you have acquired this sense, your own country will be a new world to you. Never again, as long as you live, will you tire of any landscape.

The sun veils and unveils itself more often and more quickly and more unexpectedly at Menton than at any place on the Riviera. And the setting for watching the changes is perfect. Menton can say, in the words of the old sundial,

"Son figlia del sole,  
Eppure son ombre."

## **MONTE CARLO**





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## CHAPTER VII

### MONTE CARLO

**S**AN MARINO and Andorra have maintained their independence from the Middle Ages, but as republics. The only reigning families who kept their domains from being engulfed in the evolution of modern Europe are those of Liechtenstein and Monaco. What will happen to Liechtenstein with the disappearance of the Hapsburg Empire is uncertain. Wedged in between the Vorarlberg portion of the Austrian Tyrol and Switzerland, Liechtenstein is almost as out of the way, as forgotten, as unimportant, as San Marino and Andorra. Monaco is in a different situation. The smallest country in the world covers only eight square miles, and never was very much larger than it is today. Until half a century ago Monaco was an Italian principality and not at all an anomaly. For Italy had been broken up into small political units from the Roman days. At the time

## RIVIERA TOWNS

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of the unification of Italy, the Italians had to part with a portion of the Riviera to France. Monaco lost a bit of her coast line—the Menton district—and became an enclave in France.

Because of the traditional friendship of the Grimaldi family for France, the principality was saved from extinction when the protectorate of Savoy (established by the Congress of Vienna) was withdrawn in 1861. In fact, the male line of the Grimaldi died out just after the War of Spanish Succession, and the present house is of French descent. But whether Grimaldi or Matignon, the princes of Monaco have fought for a thousand years on the side of France against the British especially, but also against the Italians, Spanish and Germans. As unhesitatingly as his predecessors had always done, Prince Albert espoused the cause of France in 1914; his son fought through the war in the French army.

And there is another reason for the continued independence of Monaco. Republics have no sense of gratitude. After the fall of Napoleon III Monaco would hardly have survived save for the gambling concession. Four years before the Franco-Prussian War, a casino and hotels built on the Roche des Spélugues had been named Monte Carlo in honor of the reigning prince. The concession, granted to a Frenchman, François Blanc, was too valuable to spoil by having Monaco come under French law! The Republic tolerated Monaco—on condition that no French officer in uniform and no

## MONTE CARLO

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inhabitant of the Département des Alpes-Maritimes (which surrounds Monaco) be allowed in the gaming rooms of the Casino. It was also agreed that except in petty cases handled in a magistrate's court all crimes should be judged by French law and the criminals delivered for punishment to France.

The arrangement is admirable from the French point of view. The Riviera has its gambling place of world-wide fame with no opprobrium or responsibility attaching to the French Government. The extra-territoriality does not extend to criminals. The inhabitants of the neighboring French towns are not demoralized by the opportunity to gamble. French army officers are protected from corruption. It is presumed that the rest of the world, which can afford a trip to the principality, will be able to take care of its own morals!

The Monégasques are similarly protected by their sovereign. They, too, are forbidden to gamble. They profit from the concession in that there are no taxes to pay in the rich little principality and in that several hundred thousand foreigners come every year to give big prices for every little service. But they run no risk of being caught by the snare they set for others. Prince and people, the Monégasques are like the wise old bartender, who said in a tone of virtuous self-satisfaction, "I never drink."

When Tennyson, traveling along the Grande Corniche, saw Monaco, it was of the old medieval principality that he could write:

## RIVIERA TOWNS

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“How like a gem, beneath, the city  
Of little Monaco, basking, glow’d.”

The old walled town, on its promontory, must indeed have seemed a gem in an unsurpassed setting in the time of Tennyson. For the little Port of Hercules and the other promontory, Spélugues, were tree- and shrub- and flower-lined. There was nothing to break the spell of old Monaco. Now, alas, the Casino and hotels of Monte Carlo cover Spélugues, and between the promontories La Condamine has sprung up, a town of red-roofed villas, larger than either Monaco or Monte Carlo and forming with them an unbroken mass of buildings. Monaco is simply an end of the city, distinct from the rest of the agglomeration only because it is high up and on a cape jutting out into the sea.

Unless one went up to explore the old town, one would not realize that it was more than the palace with its garden and the post-Tennyson cathedral, too prominent for the good of the medieval spell. La Condamine and Monte Carlo have reached the limit of expansion. In front is the sea, behind the steep wall of the mountain. The principality is all city. But the mountains and sea prevent the exclusion of nature from the picture. Despite the modern growth of Monaco, from the Grande Corniche the words of the poet still hold good. Monaco is no longer a predominantly medieval picture perhaps—but it is still a gem.

The old town is as attractive in walls and buildings as other rock villages of the Riviera. Three main streets,



W. H. P. 1917

**"The strength of Monaco is the weakness of the world"**





## MONTE CARLO

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Rue Basse, Rue du Milieu and Rue des Briques, run parallel from the Place du Palais out on the promontory. They are crossed by the narrowest of city alleys, à l'italienne, and to the right of the Rue des Briques, around the Cathedral, is the rest of the town. Nowhere does the old town extend to the sea.

On the sites of the ancient fortifications the present ruler, Prince Albert, has made gardens and built museums for his collections of prehistoric man and of ocean life. One ought never to dip into museums. If you have lots and lots of time (I mean weeks, not hours), or if you have special interest in a definite field of study, museums may be profitable. But "doing" museums is the last word in tourist folly. Yes, I know that skeletons and the cutest little fish are in those museums. I am not ashamed to confess that I never darkened their doors. Life is short, and while the Artist revels in his subjects, I find more interest in studying the living Monégasques than their—and our—negroid ancestors.

For there is a separate race, with its own patois, in Monaco. You would never spot it in the somewhat Teutonic cosmopolitanism of the Condamine and Monte Carlo tradesmen and hotel servants. It is not apparent in the impassive *croupiers* of the Casino. But within a few hundred yards, in half a dozen streets and lanes, the physiognomy, the mentality, the language of the people make you realize that regarding Monaco as a separate country is not wholly a *polite fiction* to relieve the French Government of the responsibility for the



## MONTE CARLO

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Casino. These people are different, children as well as grown-ups. They are neither French nor Italian, Provençal nor Catalan, but as distinct as mountain Basques are from French and Spanish. It is not a racial group distinction, as with the Basques. In blood, the Monégasques are affiliated to their Provençal and Italian neighbors.

What one sees in the old town of Monaco is a confirmation of the assertion of many historians that nationality, in our modern political sense of the word, and patriotism, as a mass instinct shared by millions, are phenomena of the nineteenth century. Steam transportation, obligatory primary education, universal military service, are the factors that have developed national consciousness, and the exigencies and opportunities and advantages of the industrial era have furnished the motive for binding people together in great political organisms. Today if there were no outside interests working against the solidarity of human beings leading a commonwealth existence in the same country, the political organism would soon make the race rather than the race the political organism.

San Remo and Menton and Monaco are Riviera towns all within a few miles of each other. People of the same origin have three political allegiances. In half an hour your automobile will traverse the territories of three nations. Italians and French fight under different flags and were within an ace of being lined against each other in the war. Monégasques do not fight at

## MONTE CARLO

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all. Taxes and tariff boundaries, schools and military obligations, make the differences between the three peoples. Put them all under the same dispensation and where would be your races?

In the old days the *raison d'être* of the principality was the power to prey upon commerce. From their fortress on the promontory the Grimaldi organized the Monégasques to levy tolls on passing ships. Italy was not a united country. France had not yet extended her frontiers to the Riviera. This little corner of the Mediterranean escaped the Juggernaut of developing political unity that crushed the life out of a dozen other feudal robber states. And when the logical moment for disappearance arrived, Monte Carlo saved Monaco. Another means of preying upon others was happily discovered. The Monégasques abandoned pistols and cutlasses for little rakes. The descendants of those who stood on the poops of ships now sit at the ends of green tables. The gold still pours in, however, and no law reaches those who take it.

There is this difference: you no longer empty your pockets to the Monégasques under compulsion, and the battlements of old Monaco play no part in your losses. The proverb dearest to American hearts says that a sucker is born every minute. It is incomplete, that proverb. It should be rounded out with the axiom that at some minute every person born is a sucker.

So I look over to the great white building which is the salvation of the Monégasques—their symbol of freedom

## RIVIERA TOWNS

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from taxes and military service—and know that the strength of Monaco is the weakness of the world. I return to the Place du Palais. The Artist is reluctantly strapping up his tools. We glance for a brief moment at the best sunset view on the Riviera. Ships sail by unmolested. No more have they fear of the Tête du Chien and of the huge stone *boulet* that Fort Antoine used to lance if a merchantman dared to be deaf to the call of the galley darting forth from the Port of Hercules. But we?

The Artist's fingers are nimble with the buckle after a day with the pencil. Pipe is filled from pouch with an inimitably deft movement of one hand. Reluctant is generally the right word to use when I speak of the Artist leaving his work. I am not so sure now. As I hope, he does not suggest a west-bound tram at the foot of the Palais or the 6:40 train; he says,

"If we alternate eighteen and thirty-six this evening, putting by half each time we win—"

"Like that English old maid we saw last week," I interrupted, "who doubled just once instead of splitting. I can see the drop of the jaw now. Even without the false teeth, it would have been hideous."

"On the red then as long as we last," conceded the Artist, who knew my horror of complicated figure systems, "and there's the sign."

He pointed to the red fringe that lit up fading Cap Martin.

"If we do not get over soon," I answered, "black will

## MONTE CARLO

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be the latest tip of nature." The Riviera towns under the lee of mountains do not have a lingering twilight.

But when we had finished dinner an *affiche* announcing *Aïda* turned us from the Salles de Jeu to the Salle du Théâtre. To most people gambling is a pastime not taken seriously. Only when it is a passion does one find in it the exclusive attraction of Monte Carlo. This is proved by the excellence of Monte Carlo opera. No metropolis boasts of a better orchestra and chorus; and the most famous singers are always eager to appear at Monte Carlo.

After Paris, where the war had affected vitally the quality and variety of our music, it was an evening of deep enjoyment. And we had more than just enough put aside for car fare when we bought our tickets for Nice.





**VILLEFRANCHE**





## CHAPTER VIII

### VILLEFRANCHE

**D**URING the heat of the war, shortly after the intervention of the United States, I wrote a magazine article setting forth for American readers the claims of France to Alsace-Lorraine and trying to explain why the French felt as they did about Alsace-Lorraine. Of course I spoke of Strasbourg and Mulhouse; but a copy-reader, faithfully making all spellings conform to the Century Dictionary, changed my MS. reading to Strassburg and Mulhåisen. Can you imagine my horror when I saw those awful German names staring out at me under my own signature—and in an article espousing the side of France in the Alsace-Lorraine controversy? Perhaps not—unless you understand the feeling of the actual possessor and the aspirant to possession of border and other moot territories. “By their spelling ye shall know them!” is their cry. Later, I happened to be in America

## RIVIERA TOWNS

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when that dear good faithful copy-reader changed my Bizerte to the dictionary's Bizerta in an article on Tunis, and was able to go to the mat with him. I explained that the spelling was an essential part of the political tenor of the article.

All this I repeated to the wife and critic combined in one delightful but Ulster-minded person who insisted that in English Menton must be spelled Mentone.

"You write Marseilles instead of Marseille and put the 's' on Lyon too: I've seen you do it!" she cried. "And the French call London Londres!"

"But those cities happen not to be in *terre irredente*," I explained. "Menton lies too near the Italian frontier for a friend of France to call it Mentone, whatever the English usage may be. If we retain Mentone, why have we abandoned Nizza for Nice, Eza for Éze, Roccabruna for Roquebrune, Monte Calvo for Mont Chauve, Testa del Can for Tête du Chien, Villa Franca for Villefranche?"

"Since you have at last arrived at Villefranche, you had better start your chapter," was her woman's answer.

You may have a confused picture, you may even forget many places you have visited in your travels, but Villefranche? Never! Whether you have first seen Villefranche as you came around the corner of Montboron from Nice or across the neck of Cap Ferrat from Beaulieu on the Petite Corniche, as you came through the Col des Quatre Chemins on the Grande Corniche, or as you climbed up behind Fort Montalban on the Moyenne



**"Medieval streets and buildings have almost disappeared"**



## VILLEFRANCHE

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Corniche, the memory is equally indelible. But each *corniche* gives a different impression of the only natural harbor on the Riviera. The Petite Corniche, which mounts rather high around Montboron, is the near view. You see only the *rade* with Cap Ferrat as a background. Approaching in the opposite direction, Montboron is the background. On the Moyenne Corniche the *rade* comes gradually into your field of vision. You are way above the sea, but the harbor still forms the principal part of the water foreground in the picture. On the Grande Corniche, where the Riviera coast from Cap d'Antibes to Cap Martin is before you, and the Mediterranean rises to meet the sky, every outstanding feature of the picture is a cape or town, fortification or lighthouse, except at Villefranche. Here the land is the setting. The water of the harbor, changing as you look to green and back to blue until you are not sure which is the color, is the feature that attracts and holds you. Montboron, the littoral and Cap Ferrat are as secondary as the prongs and ring which hold a precious stone.

The water edge of the harbor has become conventionalized to a large extent by the artificial stone wall built at the inner end and part-way along the Montboron slope, to make possible railway and carriage road, and by the quays and breakwaters. But enough of the unimproved line remains to indicate how the harbor must have looked before the masons got to work. The rocks of Villefranche are copper with streaks of brown-gray that change in depth of color as the sunlight changes in

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intensity. Water and rocks are not afraid to compete with flowers and trees and mountain shades for the Artist's attention. Villefranche as a maritime picture wins. And yet foliage and flora are no mean rivals. Turning the point of Montboron from Nice has brought you from the climate where many southland growths are exotic to the beginning of the tropical portion of the Riviera which extends into Italy, with Menton and Bordighera as its most typical spots.

Villefranche comes close after Menton—and ahead of Beaulieu and Monte Carlo and Condamine—in the claim to a perennial touch of the south. From Montboron to the hills east of Oneglia the mountain wall protects from the north wind and radiates the sun. But there is no deep harbor like that of Villefranche: and no other place has a Cap Martin to form a windshield from strong sea breezes.

Climate as much as the safe anchorage attracted pirates. From the Caliph Omar to the last of the Deys of Algiers, Mohammedan corsairs swept the Mediterranean. Because the Maritime Alps deprived the inhabitants of the Riviera of retreat to or succor from the hinterland, this coast was the joy of Saracens and Moors, Berbers and Turks. It is hard to believe that up to a hundred years ago the Riverains—the inhabitants of all the Mediterranean littoral, in fact, from Gibraltar to Messina—were constantly in danger of corsair raids just as our American pioneer ancestors were of Indian raids. The lay of the land and the lack of a powerful suzerain state to de-



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fend them made the Riverains facile prey. Villefranche afforded the easiest landing. Try to climb up from Villefranche over crags and through stone-paved and rock-lined ravines to the Moyenne Corniche, and then on to the higher mountain-slopes, and you can imagine how difficult it was to get away from raiders, and why the Barbary pirates took a full bag of luckless Riverains on every raid. You comprehend the *raison d'être* of the fortified hill towns, and Èze, perched on her cliff, has a new meaning as you look down on Villefranche. This fastness was held by the Saracens long after the crescent yielded elsewhere to the cross—and then became a frequent refuge for the descendants of the victors in the medieval struggle.

From the moment the French entered Algiers at the beginning of the July Monarchy, they felt that their claim to the gratitude of the Riverains justified the annexation of a portion of the Riviera. The treaty that extended French sovereignty to beyond Menton was signed at Villefranche, and immediately the little harbor was transformed into a French naval port. Until war-ships became floating fortresses Villefranche was useful to France. Now it sees only torpedo-boats and destroyers, and the lack of direct communication with the interior has prevented its commercial development. Better an artificial breakwater with no Alps behind than a natural harbor with a Cap Ferrat.

Occasionally a huge ocean liner, chartered by an American tourist agency for an Eastern Mediterranean

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tour, drops into Villefranche roadstead. These chance visits, to give the tourists a day at Nice and Monte Carlo, demonstrate that Villefranche could be a port of call for the leviathans, commercial and naval, of the twentieth century. How much easier it would be to go to the Riviera directly from London and New York, instead of having a wearisome train journey added to the ocean voyage! But freights pay a large part of passenger rates, and the routing from great port to great port is as rigid and unalterable as the fact that a straight line is not the shortest distance between two points on land. Trains and ships must pass by way of great centers of population.

A naval cemetery is the memorial of Villefranche's naval past in the last brilliant decade of the Second Empire and the early years of the Third Republic. A little American corner, which our Paris Memorial Day Committee never forgets, bears witness to the period when the American flag was known everywhere in the Mediterranean. We used to have the lion's share of the carrying trade, and Villefranche was a frequent port of call for American warships. Now we have rarely even single warships or freighters in the Mediterranean. The only American passenger line that serves Mediterranean ports is the old Turkish Hadji Daoud Line of five small and dirty Levantine ships, which ply along the coast of Asia Minor and in and out of the Greek islands, camouflaged under our flag.

The old town of Villefranche is on the western side of

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the harbor between the Petite Corniche and the water. Like all Riviera towns on a main road it has grown rapidly and medieval streets and buildings have almost disappeared, giving way to the banal architecture of the end of the nineteenth century. The garish brick villas of the head of the gulf are excrescences in their lovely garden setting. But after one has reached the eastern side of the harbor and gone through Pont Saint Jean, the tramway road, with its noise and dust and variegated bourgeois fantasies, can be abandoned.

If we except Cap Martin, no Riviera walks are lovelier than those of Cap Ferrat. On the Villefranche side, until you have passed through Saint Jean, the alternative to the tramway road is an inhospitable though tantalizing lane. For large estates, shut off by walls and hedges, are between you and the harbor. Unless you are lucky enough to know one of the owners, you will not see the harbor of Villefranche from the best of the lower vantage points. This side of Villefranche is so sheltered that one resident, an American, has been able to transform his garden into a bit of old Japan where the cherry trees blossom in Nippon profusion and colors.

It is best to pass across the cape, not turning in at the tramway bifurcation, until you reach the Promenade Maurice-Rouvier, which skirts the Anse des Fourmis along the sea from Beaulieu to Saint Jean. After you have reached Saint Jean the peninsula is before you. A maze of superb roads tempt you, circling the fort several hundred feet above sea level, crossing the peninsula on

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the slopes of the fort, and following the sea. Returning to Saint Jean, there is still another walk directly ahead of you to the east. The Cap du Saint Hospice is pine-clad, with a sixteenth-century tower at its end.

The Artist and I made a mistake of twelve hours in our visit to Saint Hospice. We should have come in the morning for the sunrise. To remedy the error we decided to spend the night at the Hôtel du Parc Saint Jean. But the sun got up long before we did.

"Our usual luck," said the Artist with a grin that had nothing of regret in it.

**NICE**

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## CHAPTER IX

### NICE

**U**NLESS the traveler has some special reason for starting at another point, he first becomes acquainted with the Riviera at Nice, and radiates from Nice in his exploration of the coast and hinterland. The Artist confessed to me that in student days the Riviera meant Nice to him, with the inevitable visit to lay a gold piece on the table at Monte Carlo. And it was Nice of the Carnival and Mardi-Gras. I in turn made a similar avowal. We knew well the Promenade des Anglais, the Casino and the Jardin Public opposite, the Place Masséna beyond the garden, where you take a tram or a *char à banc* to almost anywhere, and the Avenue de la Gare. The Artist had the advantage of me in his intimate sketching knowledge of the old Italian city back from the Quai du Midi, while I knew better than he the Avenue de la Gare. How many times have I pushed a baby

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carriage up and down that street while my wife shopped!

Nice was to us a resort, cosmopolitan like other famous playgrounds of the world, and where one strictly on pleasure bent had the same kind of a time he would have at Aix-les-Bains or Deauville, Wiesbaden or Ostend, Brighton or Atlantic City. You strolled among crowds, you bought things you did not want, you could not get away from music, you danced and went to the theater or opera, and you spent much too much of your time in hotels and restaurants. If you went on excursions, you enjoyed them, of course. But you always hurried back to Nice in order not to miss doing something of exactly the same kind that you could have done any day in the place you came from.

You have to give Nice time, and get out of your rut, before you awaken to its unique characteristics. Then, if you detach yourself from the amusement-seekers, the time-killers, the apathetic, the bored, the *blasé* and the conscientious tourists, you begin to realize that the metropolis of the Riviera (including its suburbs and Monte Carlo) is a world in itself—an inexhaustible reservoir for exploration and reflection. Because it is the only place in Europe where Americans (North and South) can honestly say that they feel at home, because it was made for and by everybody and caters to everybody, Nice stands the test of cosmopolitanism. Every great capital and every seaport at the cross-roads of world trade is cosmopolitan, but in a narrower sense than Nice. Capitals and seaports have the general character,





**"Italian in blood and culture and instincts"**



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in the last analysis the atmosphere, of the country they administer and serve. None has the *sans patrie* stamp of Nice. If Edward Everett Hale had allowed his hero to go to Nice, the man without a country would not have felt alone in the world.

I was on the Suez Canal when the Germans heralded the Verdun offensive. I hurried back to France, and spent a couple of days with my wife at Nice before going on to the front. They were, perhaps, the most critical days of the war, when one watched the *communiqué* with the same intensity as one tried to read hope into serious bulletins from a loved one's bedside. After leaving Nice, I discovered that the pall of death did hang over France. But in Nice there seemed to be no mass instinct of national danger, no sickening anxiety. On the Avenue de la Gare I noticed hundreds pass by the newspaper bulletins without displaying enough interest to stop and read.

Two years later, at another critical moment when the Germans were once more closing in on Paris and bombarding the city with the long-distance cannon, I spoke at the Eldorado. The meeting, organized by the Préfet and Maire, drew a large and sympathetic audience. Among residents and visitors are to be found thousands of intense patriots. But when I left the theater and walked back to my hotel, I realized that Nice in 1918 was like Nice in 1916. The population as a whole, inhabitants and guests, had no French national consciousness. When I delivered the same message in the

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municipal casino of Grasse the next day, I knew that I was again in France. Frenchmen themselves attribute the lack of war spirit in Nice to the general indifference and lesser patriotism of the Midi! But this is because Nice means the Midi to most of them. They are unfair to the Midi. In no way does Nice represent the Midi of France except that it basks in the same sun.

The common explanation of the failure of France to assimilate Nice is that only sixty years have passed since the annexation and that a large portion of the Niçois are Italian in blood and culture and instincts. There may be some truth in all this. But two generations is a long time, and France has proved her ability to make six decades count in attaching to herself and stamping in her image other border populations. Two factors have worked against the assimilation of Nice: the maintenance of the independence of Monaco, with privileges and no responsibilities for its inhabitants; and the enormous number of foreign residents, who have lost their attachment to their own countries and who do not care to give or are incapable of giving allegiance to the country in which they live. Add to these demoralizing influences, at work throughout the sixty years, the flood of tourists and temporary residents of all nations; and is it to be wondered at that the Niçois, native and alien, have so little in common with France?

When you stroll along the Promenade des Anglais, with its hotels and palm-surrounded villas, the Mediterranean coast line extending alluringly from the distant

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lighthouse of Antibes in the west to the Château, set in green, in the foreground to the east, you feel that you are in one of the fairy spots of the earth. The sea, the city climbing up the hill to Cimiez, the white-capped mountains beyond, and on the handsome promenade the best-gowned of Europe, all in the brilliant sunshine of a soft spring day—what could be more charming? And then, suddenly, your unwilling nostrils breathe in a strong whiff of sewage. Have you been mistaken? Surely you are dreaming. The Casino dances on the water. A bevy of girls come out of the Hôtel Ruhl to join the Lenten noon-day throng. Nothing disagreeable like sewage—but there it is again! Whew! Where can that sewer empty? Fault of French engineering, an American would say.

But the sea has brought me that smell on the boardwalk in front of the Traymore at Atlantic City. It is difficult to get ahead of nature, and the undertow does bring back what you thought you were rid of.

Figuratively speaking, the surprise on the Promenade des Anglais meets you every day in your study of Nice. The city charms: and it repels. You have been drinking in its beauty and its fascination. Suddenly something sordid, ugly, disgusting, breaks the spell. On the Promenade des Anglais sewage greets the eye as well as the nose. Not vicious women and poor little dolls alone, but cruel and weak faces, shifty and vapid faces, self-centered and morose faces, leech faces, pig faces, of well-tailored men—you watch them pass, you remember what

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you have seen at the tables in near-by Monte Carlo, and the utter depravity of your race frightens you. Except clothes and jewels and the ability to get a check cashed, what is the difference between these people and the sailors from a hundred ships, making merry with their girls in the narrow streets back from the Vieux Port of Marseilles?

The law of compensation often comforts and cheers. But as often it is remorseless. Broken health and empty purses, desperation, mute suffering and madness, we saw at Monte Carlo. Where the world flocks for pleasure, agony of soul reveals itself more readily than elsewhere because of its incongruity. Nice is full of tragedy, and none takes the pains to conceal it as at Monte Carlo. The casual visitor creates his own atmosphere in Nice, and he goes away with the most pleasant memory, having found what he sought. But you cannot stroll day after day on the Promenade without marking many that do not smile. You watch them and you see unhappiness, unrest, despair, and resignation. If you become acquainted with the life and gossip of the various colonies, you will not need a Victor Marguerite to reveal to you the inner life of the world's "playground." More frequently than not it is a case of on with the dance. What a price people do pay to play!

Just one illustration. The Russians used to be an important factor in the social life of Nice. They had money and they could give an American points on spending. Attracted by the sun, many made their homes in

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Nice. They lived like the lilies of the field. They could count on a sure thing. The moujiks of great estates toiled for them, and from the days of their great-great-grandfathers the revenues had never ceased. During the first years of the World War, the Russians were in high favor at Nice. They were the powerful allies of France, brothers-in-arms, who fought for the common cause. Then came the Revolution. Cosmopolitan Nice would have forgiven the defection of Russia. But when the revenues from Petrograd and Moscow banks no longer came in, that was another matter! Where the pursuit of pleasure is king, there is no pity for the moneyless courtier, whatever the cause of his change of fortune. The Russians sold their jewels and their fur coats, the rugs and furniture of their villas, and then the villas themselves. Perhaps they were "accommodated" a little bit at first. But they were soon left to their own resources.

Before the end of the war, the center of the Russian colony was a soup kitchen on a side street, presided over by princesses and served by beautiful million-heiresses of the old régime. Good stuff in those girls, too, who smiled as gayly as of old and talked to me eagerly about becoming governesses or stenographers. And real *noblesse* in the old men who climbed up the narrow stairs with their pails, coming to fetch their one meal of the day. In one of them I recognized a former ambassador to France. The last time I had seen him he was on horseback between Czar Nicholas and Presi-

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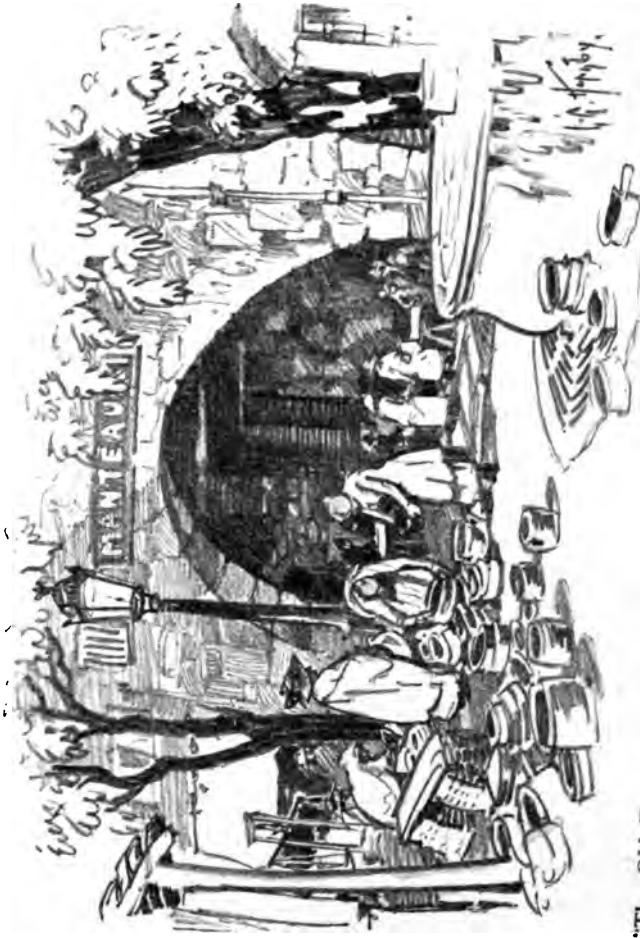
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dent Loubet crossing the Point Alexandre III on the opening day of the Paris Exposition of 1900.

Enough of shadows! None ever went to Nice in search of them, and comparatively few stay long enough to find them. They are in the picture, and there would be no true picture without them. But they ought to stay in the background. They do stay there. You smell the sewage rarely. The all-pervading sunshine is a tonic. Speculating about why others came here and what they are doing with their lives may hold you through the rainy season. The Carnival puts you in a more material frame of mind. Unless Lent is early, the sun begins to warm the cockles of your heart on Mardi-Gras, and by May it will almost blind you on the water-front. One is not in the mood to let the misfortunes and unhappiness and evil of others cloud his joy. After all, of the quarter million pleasure-seekers who come to Nice each year, the greater part are in as good moral health as yourself, and very few of them have any more reason than you to be "in the dumps."

Unless one becomes engrossed in the study of cosmopolitan human nature to the point of being sunshine-proof, one soon tires of the foreign residential and hotel and shopping quarters of the city. They lack "subjects," as the Artist would put it. But at the eastern end of Nice, the Old Town, home of Garibaldi and many another Red Shirt, takes you far from the psychology of cosmopolitanism and the philosophy of hedonism. This is the direction of Grande Corniche, of villa-studded





"The Old Town takes you far from the psychology of cosmopolitanism and the philosophy of hedonism."



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winding and mounting roads, of the best views (if we except Cimiez) of city and sea.

A mountain stream of varying volume, but always a river before the end of Lent, separates the *ville des étrangers* from the *vieille ville*. The Paillon, as it is called, disappears at the Square Masséna, and finds its way to sea through an underground channel. From the center of the city you cross the Paillon by the Pont Garibaldi or the Pont Vieux. Or you can enter the Old Town from the Place Masséna and the Rue Saint-François de Paule, which leads into the Cours Saleya. Here is the most wonderful flower market in the world, with vegetables and fruit and fowls encroaching upon the Place de la Préfecture. Behind the Préfecture you can lose yourself in a labyrinth of narrow streets that indicate the Italian origin of Nice. If you bear always to the right, however, you either make a circle or come out at the foot of the Château.

East of the Jardin Public, the Promenade des Anglais becomes the Quai du Midi, renamed Quai des Etats-Unis in the short-lived burst of enthusiasm of 1918. At least, the aldermen of Nice were more cautious than those of most French cities, and did not call it Quai du Président-Wilson *nel dolce tempo de la prima etade!* Following the quay and keeping the Old Town on the left, you come to the castle hill, still called the Château, although the great fortress of the Savoyards was destroyed by the Duke of Berwick in the siege of 1706. The hill is now a park, surmounted by a terrace, and is

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well worth the climb to look down upon the city and the Baie des Anges, especially at sunset. At the end of the Quai du Midi (excuse my diffidence, the Quai des Etats-Unis) stands the low Tour Bellanda, the only tower remaining of the old fortifications. The Château is a promontory, and when you take the road which skirts it, be sure to hold tight to your hat. The Niçois call the windy corner Rauba Capéu (Hat Robber).

Now you are in still another Nice, the Port, protected by a long jetty, on which is perched a lighthouse. The Niçois, traditionally seafaring folk, are proud of their little port, with its clean-cut solid stone quays. Steam-born transportation on land and sea, demanding facilities undreamed of in the good old days and tending to concentration of trade at Marseilles and Genoa, has prevented the maritime development of Nice. But there is local coast traffic and competition with Cannes and Monte Carlo for yachts. Fishing and pleasure sailing add to the volume of tonnage. And the Niçois do not let you forget that their city is the port for Corsica.

Beyond the harbor, the Boulevard de l'Impératrice de Russie leads to Villefranche. Another name to change! In the midst of what is most beautiful we cannot get away from tragedies, from reminders of blasted hopes.

## **ANTIBES**

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## CHAPTER X

### ANTIBES

**B**ETWEEN Menton and Monte Carlo the coast is broken by Cap Martin, between Monte Carlo and Nice by Cap Ferrat, between Nice and Cannes by Cap d'Antibes. The capes are larger and longer as we go west, just as the distances between more important towns grow longer. Although it does not seem so to the tourist, it is much farther from Nice to Cannes than from Nice to Menton. The eastern end of the Riviera is so crowded with things to see, and town follows town in such rapid succession, that you think you have gone a long way from Nice to the Italian frontier. And except for skipping the two larger promontories, railway and tramway alike follow right along the coast. From Nice to Cannes, the tramway is inland from the railway. So is the automobile road. You fly along at a rapid rate, with only rare glimpses of the sea, and pass through few villages until you reach Antibes.

From Nice, from Saint-Paul-du-Var, and from Cagnes you cannot see the Riviera coast beyond Antibes. The

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Cape, with its lighthouse and fort, is your horizon. This corresponds with history as well as with geography: for the Cap d'Antibes was the old Franco-Italian frontier. It is still in a very real sense a boundary line. The word Riviera, which has kept its Italian form, was applied historically to the coast lands of the Gulf of Genoa. From Antibes to Genoa we had the Riviera di Ponente, and from Genoa to Spezia the Riviera di Levante. Only after Napoleon III exacted the district of Nice as part payment for French intervention in the Italian war of liberation was the term "French Riviera" gradually extended to include the coast far west of Antibes.

What was added to France under Napoleon III has lost its purely Italian character. But it has not gained the stamp of France. From Antibes to Menton, the Riviera is more remarkably and undeniably international than any other bit of the world I have ever seen. Some of the old towns back from the coast are becoming French in the new generation. But along the coast you are not in France until you reach Antibes. You may have thought that you were in France at Menton and Beaulieu and Nice. But the contrast of Antibes and Grasse, which are French to the core, makes you realize that sixty years is not sufficient to destroy the traditions and instincts of centuries.

At Antibes and along the closely built up coast and between Antibes and Cannes, the international atmosphere is by no means lost. It requires the contrast of





"The French atmosphere begins to impress one at Antibes"



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Cannes with Saint-Raphaël to show the difference between a cosmopolitan and a genuine French watering place. But the French atmosphere begins to impress one at Antibes. A knowledge of history is not needed to indicate that here was the old frontier.

Since the days of the Greeks Antibes has been a frontier fortress. Ruins of fortifications of succeeding centuries show that the town has always been on the same site, on the coast east of the Cape, looking towards Nice. Antipolis was a frontier fortress, built by the Phœceans of Marseilles to protect them from the aggressive Ligurians of Genoa. Nice was an outpost, whose name commemorates a Greek victory over the Ligurians. At the mouth of the Var, from antiquity to modern times, races and religions, building against each other political systems for the control of Mediterranean commerce, have met in the final throes of conflicts the issue of which had been decided elsewhere—and often long before the fighting died out here. Phœnicians and Greeks, Carthaginians and Romans, Greeks and Romans, Romans and Gauls, Gauls and Teutonic tribes, Franks and Saracens, Spanish and French and Italians met at the foot of the Maritime Alps. There was never a time in history when governmental systems or political unities did not have as a goal natural boundaries, and, once having reached the goal, did not feel that security necessitated going farther. Invasions thus provoked counter-invasions.

On sea it has been as on land. Something is acquired.

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Immediately something more must be taken to safeguard the new acquisition.

All this comes to one with peculiar force at Antibes. You look at Nice from your promontory, and your eye follows the coast from promontory to promontory, and you can picture how the Phoceans, once established at Antibes, were tempted to extend the protective system of Marseilles. You have only to turn around and follow the coast beyond the Estérel to understand how the Ligurians, if they had captured Antibes, would still have felt unsafe. And then your eye sweeps the range of the white Maritime Alps. Hannibal had to cross them to carry the war into Italy. So did Napoleon. And Cæsar, to save the Republic from a recurrence of the menace of the Cimbri and Teutoni, brought his armies into Gaul. The Saracens were once on this coast. When they were expelled from it, the French went to Africa as the Romans before them had gone to Africa after expelling the Carthaginians from Europe.

Of the medieval fortress, erected against the Saracens, two square keeps remain. The strategic importance of Antibes during the heyday of the Bourbon Empire is attested by the Vauban fortifications. The high loopholed walls enclosing the harbor have not been maintained intact, but the foundation, a pier over five hundred feet long, is still, after two centuries and a half, the breakwater. The view towards Nice from Vauban's Fort Carré or from the larger tower, around which the church is built, affords the best panorama of the Mari-

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time Alps on the Riviera. Nowhere else on the Mediterranean coast, except from Beirut to Alexandretta or on the Silician plain or in the Gulf of Saloniki, do you have so provoking a contrast of nearby but unattainable snow with sizzling heat. This may not be always true. The day of the aeroplane, as a common and matter-of-fact means of locomotion, is coming.

Looking towards the Alps from the Fort Carré, the donjon of Villeneuve-Loubet and the hill towns of Cagnes and Saint-Paul-du-Var, where we had passed happy days, seem as near as Nice. Farther off on the slope of Mont Férion we could distinguish Tourette and Levens side by side with their castles, and in the foreground Vence. To the left was Tourrettes. Back from the Valley of the Loup was exploration and sketching ground for another season. But just a few kilometers ahead of us, halfway to Villeneuve-Loubet, Biot tempted us. We had driven through this town not mentioned by Baedeker, and had promised ourselves a second visit to the old church of the Knights Templar. But life consists of making choices, and one does not readily turn his back on the Cap d'Antibes. In the town you are just at the beginning of the peninsula whose conical form and unshuttness (is that a word: perhaps I should have used hyphens?) enables you to walk five miles punctuating every step with a new exclamation of delight.

Only we did not walk. Joseph-Marie, who would have been Giuseppe-Maria at Nice, stopped to look over the Artist's shoulder and incidentally to suggest that we

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might have cigarettes. A veteran of two years at twenty, his empty left sleeve told why he was *reformé*. Glad to get out of the mess so easily, he explained to us laconically; and now he was eking out his pension by driving a cart for the Vallauris pottery. The express train "burned" (as he put it) the pottery station, and he had come to put on *grande vitesse* parcels at Antibes. Cannes was a hopeless place for the potters: baskets of flowers always took precedence there over dishes and jugs. The Artist believed that Joseph-Marie's horse could take us around the cape with less effects from the heat than we should suffer, and that for ten francs Joseph-Marie could submit to his boss's wrath or invent a story of unavoidable delay. I agreed. So did Joseph-Marie. If we proved too much heavier than pottery, we would take turns walking. At any rate, the Artist's kit had found a porter.

We took the Boulevard du Cap to Les Nilles, were lucky in finding the garden of the Villa Thuret open, and then let our horse climb up the Boulevard Notre-Dame to the lighthouse on top of La Garoupe, as the peninsula's hill is called. Here the Riviera coast can be seen in both directions. The view is not as extended as that of Cap Roux, for Cannes is shut off by the Cap de la Croisette. But in compensation you have Nice and the hill towns of the Var, and while lacking the clear detail of Cap Ferrat and Cap Martin you get the background of the Maritime Alps which is not visible east of Nice. And the Iles de Lérins look so different from their usual

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aspect as sentinels to Cannes that it is hard to believe they are the same islands. Near the lighthouse and semaphore a paved path, marked with the stations of the cross, leads to a chapel.

The Villa Thuret is the property of the state, and is used as a botanical nursery for the Jardin des Plantes at Paris. In variety, however, it does not rival the Giardino Hanbury near Menton, and in beauty it is surpassed by the private garden of Villa Eilenroc, near the end of the Cap d'Antibes. These two gardens, the most remarkable of the Riviera, were made by Englishmen who preferred the sun and warmth of the Riviera to their native land. The most wonderful garden on Cap Ferrat is the creation of an American. Cannes was "made" by Lord Brougham. The other important estate of the Cap d'Antibes, Château de la Garoupe, is the property of an Englishman. As at Arcachon and Biarritz and Pau, as at Aix-les-Bains, Anglo-Saxon ownership of villas and German ownership of hotels and the prevalence of Teutons as shopkeepers and waiters prove the passion of men of the north for lands of the south.

Twenty years ago, just after Fashoda, there was a strong current of uneasiness among British residents on the Riviera. The experiences of civilians caught by Napoleon and kept prisoners for years had passed into English history and literature. British consuls were surprised to find that thousands of their compatriots, of whom they had had no previous knowledge, were living all the year round on the Riviera. These people came

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to make inquiry about what would be done to them if France did declare war suddenly against Great Britain. Would they be given time to leave the country? Fifteen years later the calamity of a sudden interruption of a peaceful existence, basking in the sun, did fall upon foreigners, but statesmen had shuffled the cards around, and this time the civilians caught in the net were Germans and Austrians. The Napoleonic principle still held. Italy could be seen with the naked eye. But none were allowed to pass out. Tourists and residents, subjects of the Central Powers, were arrested and imprisoned on the Iles de Lérins, where they remained five years, many of them in sight of their villas on the coast and the hotels they had built and managed. They stayed longer than Marshal Bazaine, who managed to escape, but not as long as the mysterious Man with the Iron Mask.

One of the keepers at the Antibes lighthouse had been an auxiliary soldier in the fort of Sainte-Marguerite during the early years of the war. He told us that some of the trapped tourists were very restive, but that most of the German civilians who were residents of the Riviera were far from being discontented with their lot. Better a prison on the Ile Sainte-Marguerite than exile from the Riviera! This was better taste and wiser philosophy than we expected of Germans. One could go far and fare worse than an enforced sojourn on one of the loveliest islands of the Mediterranean, whose pine forests are reminiscent of Prinkipo. From 1914 to 1919 life was much harsher beyond those Alps.





**"Saint-Honorat was a monastic establishment from the fourth century to the Revolution"**



## ANTIBES

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Saint-Honorat, the smaller island half a mile from Sainte-Marguerite, was a monastic establishment from the fourth century to the French Revolution. It passed into ecclesiastical hands again in the Second Empire and became a Cistercian monastery. Although the restoration was accomplished with distressing thoroughness forty years ago, some parts of the chapel date back to the seventh century, and a huge double donjon—the dominating feature of the island from the coast—remains from the twelfth-century fortifications. A road, on which are ruins of four medieval chapels, runs round the island. We were unable to visit Sainte-Marguerite and on Saint-Honorat pencil and paper had to be kept out of sight. But I must not wander to another day.

Joseph-Marie liked our tobacco and the horse did not mind stopping en route. It was six o'clock when we reached Juan-les-Pins, only a mile from Antibes on the other side of the cape. Two miles farther along the coast, at Golfe-Juan, where the road turns in to Vallauris, we climbed down from the cart, brushed much dust from our clothes, and started home along the coast road to Cannes. Joseph-Marie waved his empty sleeve in farewell, happy in our promise to look him up some day in Vallauris with a pocketful of cigarettes.



**CANNES**

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## CHAPTER XI

### CANNES

**O**F one-half of Tarascon the prince whom Tartarin met in Algiers displayed an astonishingly detailed knowledge. Concerning the rest of the town he was as astonishingly noncommittal. When it leaked out that the prince had been in the Tarascon jail long enough to become familiar with what could be seen from one window, Tartarin understood his limitation. My picture of Cannes is as indelible as the prince's picture of Tarascon. For most of my Riviera days were spent in a villa across the Golfe de la Napoule from Cannes. Not infrequently our baby Hope gave us the privilege of seeing Cannes by sunrise. We ate and worked on a terrace below our bedroom windows. Every evening we watched Cannes disappear or become fairyland in the moonlight.

## RIVIERA TOWNS

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What we saw from the Villa Étoile was the Golfe de la Napoule from the Pointe de l'Esquillon to the Cap de la Croisette. The Corniche de l'Estérel rounded the Esquillon and came down to sea level at Théoule through a forest of pines. It passed our villa. The curve of the gulf between us and Cannes was only seven miles. First came La Napoule, above whose old tower on the sea rose a hill crowned with the ruins of a chapel. A viaduct with narrow arches carried the railway across the last ravine of the Estérel. In the plain, between two little rivers, the Siagne and the Riou, was a grove of umbrella pines. Here began the Boulevard Jean Hibert, protected by a sea-wall in concrete, leading into Cannes. The town of Cannes, flanked on the left by Mont Chevalier and on the right by La Croisette, displayed a solid mass of hotels on the water front. Red-roofed villas climbed to Le Cannet and La Californie, elbowing each other in the town and scattering in the suburbs until the upper villas were almost lost in foliage. Behind were the Maritime Alps. Not far beyond La Croisette, the Cap d'Antibes jutted out into the sea. At night the lighthouses of Cannes and Antibes flashed alternately red and green, and between them Cannes sparkled. Inland to the left of Cannes were Mougins on a hill and Grasse above on the mountain side. Occasional trails of smoke marked the main line of the railway along the coast and the branch line from Cannes to Grasse. In the sea lay the Iles de Lérins, Sainte-Marguerite almost touching the point of La Croisette.





"La Napoule, above whose tower on the sea rose a hill crowned with the ruins of a chapel. Behind were the Maritime Alps."



## CANNES

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But unlike the Prince, we did have a chance to see Cannes at other angles. Cannes was the metropolis to which we went hopefully to hire cooks, find amusement, and buy food and drink. Théoule had neither stores nor cafés, and after the Artist came we were glad to vary the monotony of suburban life. It is always that way with city folk. How wonderful the quiet, how delightful the seclusion of the "real country"! But after a few weeks, while you may hate yourself for wanting noise and lights, while you may still affect to despise the herding instinct, you find yourself quite willing to commune with nature a little less intimately than in the first enthusiastic days of your escape from the whirl and the turmoil of your accustomed atmosphere. Not that Cannes is ever exactly "whirl and turmoil;" but you could have tea at Rumpelmayer's, you could dance and listen to music and see shows at the Casino, and you could look in shop windows. On the terrace of the Villa Étoile we thanked God that we were out in the country, and we loved our walks on the Corniche road and back into the Estérel. But it was a comfort to have Cannes so near! We were not dependent upon the twice-a-day *omnibus* train, which made all the stops between Marseilles and Nice. An hour and a half of brisker walking than one would have cared to indulge in farther east on the Riviera took us to Cannes, and the *cochers* were always reasonable about driving out to Théoule in the evening.

From our villa to La Napoule we were still in the

## RIVIERA TOWNS

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Estérel. Then we crossed the mouth of the Siagne by a bridge, and came down to the sea on the Boulevard Jean Hibert. Between the mouth of the Siagne and Mont Chevalier are the original villas of Cannes and the hotels of the Second Empire. Here Lord Brougham built the Villa Eléonore Louise in 1834, when Cannes was a fishing village, not better known than any other hamlet along the coast. Here are the Château Vallombrosa (now the Hôtel du Parc), the Villa Laroche-foucauld and the Villa Rothschild, whose unrivaled gardens are shut off by high walls and shrubbery. They are well worth a visit: but you must know when and how to get into them. As you near Mont Chevalier, the sea wall, no longer needed to protect the railway (which for a couple of miles had to run right on the sea to avoid the grounds and villas laid out before it was dreamed of), recedes for a few hundred feet and leaves a beach.

On Mont Chevalier is the Old Town, grouped around a ruined castle and an eleventh-century tower. The parish church is of the thirteenth century. The buildings on the quay below, facing the port, are of the middle of the nineteenth century. But they look much older. For they were built by townspeople, and serve the needs of the small portion of the population which would be living in Cannes if it were not a fashionable watering place. Despite its marvelous growth, Nice has always maintained a life and industries apart from tourists and residents of the leisure class. Cannes, on

## CANNES

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the other hand, with the exception of the little Quartier du Suquet, is a watering place. It needs Mont Chevalier, as Monte Carlo needs Monaco, to make us realize that Cannes existed before this spot was taken up and developed by French and British nobility. The square tower and the cluster of buildings around it, the hotels and restaurants of fishermen on the Quai Saint Pierre, dominate the port. This bit out of the past, and of another world in the present, is at the end of the vista as one walks along the Promenade de la Croisette: and the Boulevard Jean Hibert runs right into it. The touch of antiquity would otherwise be lacking, and the Artist would scarcely have considered it worth his while to take his kit when we went to Cannes.

The port is formed by a breakwater extending out from the point of Mont Chevalier, with a jetty opposite. Except for the fishermen, who are strong individualists and sell their catch right from their boat, the harbor's business is in keeping with the city's business. Its shipping consists of pleasure craft. Among the yachts whose home is Cannes one used to see the *Lysistrata* of Commodore James Gordon Bennett. How many times have I received irate messages and the other kind, too, both alike for my own good, sent from that vessel! In the garden of his beautiful home at Beaulieu, between Villefranche and Monaco, the Commodore told me of the offer he had received from the Russian Government for this famous yacht. Not many months after the *Lysistrata* disappeared from its anchorage at Cannes,

## RIVIERA TOWNS

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the man who had been the reason—and means—of Riviera visits to more journalists than myself died at Beaulieu.

Only on the side of Mont Chevalier has the harbor a quay. The inner side is bordered by the Allées de la Liberté, a huge rectangle with rows of old trees under which the flower market is held every morning. At the Old Town end is the Hôtel de Ville and at the east end the Casino. Running out seaward from beside the Casino is the Jetée Albert Edouard. To its very end the jetty is paved, and when a stiff sea wind is blowing you can drink in the spray to your heart's content. Behind the Casino is a generous beach. This is one great advantage of Cannes over Nice, where instead of sand you have gravel and pebbles. The Riviera is largely deserted before the bathing season sets in, but one does miss the sand. At Cannes kiddies are not deprived of pails and shovels and grownups can stretch out their blankets and plant their umbrellas.

The Promenade de la Croisette runs along the sea from the Casino to the Restaurant de la Réserve on La Croisette. The difference between the Promenade de la Croisette and the Promenade des Anglais was summed up by an English friend of mine in five words. "More go-carts and less dogs," he said. "More wives and less *cocottes*," the Artist put it. Of course there are some children at Nice and some *cocottes* at Cannes. And where fashion reigns the difference between *mondaine* and *demi-mondaine* is unfortunately not always apparent.



**"A bit out of the past, and of another world  
in the present"**





## CANNES

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Gold frequently glitters. But Cannes is less garish than Nice in buildings and in people.

Doubling the Cap de la Croisette, we are in the Golfe Juan, with the Cap d'Antibes beyond. Here Napoleon, fearing his possible reception at Saint-Raphaël, landed on his return from Elba. A column marks the spot. Bound for the final test of arms at Waterloo, Napoleon little dreamed that twenty years later his English foes would begin to make a peaceable conquest of this coast, and that within a hundred years French and English would be fighting side by side on French soil against the Germans. How much has the Englishman's love of the Riviera had to do with the Entente Cordiale? What part has the Riviera played in the Franco-Russian Alliance? British and Russian sovereigns have shown as passionate a fondness for this corner of France as their subjects. There are English and Russian churches at Cannes and Nice. Men who played a vital part in forming the present alliance were regular visitors to the Riviera. At the beginning of the Promenade de la Croisette, only three miles from the Napoleon column, stands Puech's remarkable statue of Edward VII, who spoke French with a German accent, but who never concealed his preference for France over the land of his ancestors.

One charm of Cannes is the feeling one has of not being crowded. At Nice and along the eastern Riviera hotels and villas jostle each other. Around Cannes the gardens are more important than the buildings. Strik-

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ing straight inland from the Casino past the railway station, the broad Boulevard Carnot gradually ascends to Le Cannet. This is the only straight road out of Cannes. All the other roads wind and turn, bringing you constantly around unexpected corners until you have lost your sense of direction. Branches of trees stick out over garden walls overhung with vines. Many of the largest hotels can be reached only by these *chemins*. You realize that the city has grown haphazard, and that no methodical city architect was allowed to make boulevards and streets that would disturb the seclusion of the villa-builders, who plotted out their grounds with never a thought of those who might later build higher up. So roads skirted properties. The result does not commend itself to those who are in a hurry. But it gives suburban Cannes an aspect unique on the Riviera. Many of the hotels thus hidden away are built on private estates, and if you want to get to them you have to follow all the curves.

The labyrinthine approach adds greatly to the delight of a climb to La Californie. If you go by carriage, unless you have a map, you are tempted to feel that the *cocher* is taking a roundabout route to justify the high price he asked you. But if you go afoot—and without a map—you may find yourself back at the point of departure before you know it. But however extended your wanderings, the beauty of the roads is ample compensation, and when you reach at last the Square du Splendide-Panorama, nearly eight hundred feet above



**"Around Cannes the gardens are more important than the buildings"**



## CANNES

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the city, you are rewarded by a view of mountains and sea, from Nice to Cap Roux, which makes you say once more—as you have so often done in Riviera explorations —“This is the best!”

After lunch at the observatory we decided to walk on to Vallauris and look up our friend of Antibes at the pottery. A *cocher* without a fare persuaded us to visit the aqueduct at Clausonne en route to Vallauris. He painted the glories of the scenery and of Roman masonry. “You will never regret listening to me,” he urged. We followed the wave of his hand, and climbed meekly aboard, although at lunch we had been carrying on an antiphonal hymn of praise to the pleasure and benefit of shanks’ mare.

We did not regret abandoning our walk. I managed to get the Artist by the Chapelle de Saint-Antoine on the Col de Vallauris and to limit him to a hasty *croquis* of the Clausonne Aqueduct. We were out for pleasure, with no thought of articles. When you feel that you are going to have to turn your adventures to a practical use, it does take away from the sense of relaxation that a writer like anyone else craves for on his day off. On the road to Vallauris we were more struck by the heather than any other form of vegetation. The mountains and hills were covered with it, and whatever else we saw, heather was always in the picture on the hills and mimosa along the roadside. From the roots of transplanted Mediterranean heather—and not from briar—are made what we call briarwood pipes. When a salesman as-

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sure you that the pipe he offers is "genuine briar," if it really was briar, you would think it wasn't. When names have become trademarks, we have to persist in their misuse.

Vallauris was called the golden valley (*vallis aurea*) because of the pottery the Romans discovered the natives making from the fine clay of the banks of the little stream that runs into the Golfe Juan. For twenty centuries the inhabitants of Vallauris have found no reason to change their *métier*. They are still making dishes and vases and statuettes, and there is still plenty of clay. Moreover, modern methods have not found a substitute either for the potter at his wheel or for the little ovens of limited capacity when it comes to turning out work that is flawless and bears the stamp of individuality. We can manufacture almost everything en masse and in series except pottery. Joseph-Marie was not in evidence at Vallauris: but we found the potters glad to show us their work, seemingly for the pride they had in it. Of course you did have a chance to buy: but salesmanship was not obtrusive.

The great industry of Cannes is fresh cut flowers. The flower market of a morning in the Allées de la Liberté is richer in variety than that of Nice. There is less charm, however, in the sellers. In Nice you simply cannot help buying what is offered you. Pretty faces and soft pleading voices draw the money from your pocket. You look from the flowers to those who offer them: and then you buy the flowers. At Cannes, on the



**"There is less charm in the sellers than at Nice"**





## CANNES

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other hand, you ask yourself first what in the world you are going to do with them after you have them. Perhaps this difference in your mood is the reason of the enormous industry that has been developed in Cannes. You are not asked to buy flowers because a seller wants you to and is able to lure you with a smile. You are told that here is the unique chance to send your friends in Paris and London a bit of the springtime fragrance of the Riviera.

“Three francs, five francs, ten francs, *monsieur*, and tomorrow morning in Paris or tomorrow evening in London the postman will deliver the flowers to your friend.”

Pen and ink, cards, gummed labels or tags are put under your nose. You are shown the little reed baskets, in rectangular form, that will carry your gift. If your Paris or London friend knows Latin, and thinks a minute, he will realize that Cannes is living up to her name in thus utilizing her reeds to send out over Europe an Easter greeting, jonquils, carnations, roses, geraniums with the smell of lemons, orange blossoms, cassia, jessamine, lilacs, violets and mimosa.

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## CHAPTER XII

### MOUGINS

**W**E were about to enter the Casino at Cannes. The coin had been flipped to decide which of us should pay, and we were starting up the steps when a yell and a clatter of horses' hoofs made us look around. A victoria was bearing down upon us. The *cocher* was waving his whip in our direction. We recognized the man who had driven us to Grasse.

"A superb afternoon," he explained, "and Mougins is only twelve kilometers away. With Mougins at twelve kilometers, it is incredible to think that you would be spending an afternoon like this in the Casino. I would surely be lacking in my duty—"

"What is Mougins?" I interrupted.

"All that is beautiful," explained the *cocher* enthusiastically. "A city on a hill. A glorious view."

"That settles it," said the Artist, turning away. "Every city is on a hill, and all views are glorious."

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"But Mougins is different," insisted the *cochier*, "and the view is different. Besides, the wine is unique. It is sparkling, and can be taken at five o'clock with little cakes. There are roads you have not seen, and pretty girls at work in the rose fields. We shall drive slowly."

There had been much wandering during the past fortnight and we were ready for a quiet afternoon at the Casino. But we allowed ourselves to be persuaded. The Casino was always there, and we had never heard of *vin mousseux* on the Riviera. Baedeker, as if in duty bound to miss nothing, records the existence of Mougins, three kilometers east of the Cannes-Grasse road after you pass the ten-kilometer stone on the way to Grasse—then gives the next town. Mougins is not starred, and nothing around Mougins is starred. Was not that a reason for going there?

English royalty used to come to Cannes, and every season more middle class Britishers woke up to the fact that it would be pleasant to write home to one's friends from Cannes. Hotels and villas increased rapidly. When English royalty went elsewhere, Russian Grand Dukes and Balkan princelings saved the day for the snobs. Consequently, the town has spread annoyingly into the country. A row of hotels faces the sea, and on side streets are less pretentious hotels, invariably advertised as a minute's walk from the sea. A mile inland is another quarter of fashionable hotels for those whom the splashing of the waves makes nervous. Then the interminable suburbs of villas and *pensions* commence.

## MOUGINS

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When city people seek a change of climate, they do not always want a change of environment. They are intent upon living the same life as at home, upon following the same round of amusements. They cannot be happy without their comforts and conveniences, and this means the impossibility of getting away from streets and buildings and noises and crowds. The class that has monopolized the Riviera has tried to recreate Paris in the Midi. If one wants to find the country right on the sea coast, one must get off the train before reaching Cannes. Between Cannes and the Italian frontier, one does not have the sea without the city. Only by going inland can one find the country without missing the sight and feel of the sea. For everywhere the land rises. The valleys rise. Roads keep mounting and curving to avoid heavy grades, and foothills do not hide the Alps and the Mediterranean. After escaping from Cannet, the outermost suburb, the road to Mougins goes through a valley of oranges and roses. There are stone farmhouses with thatched roofs and barns that give forth the smell of hay. There are cows and chickens.

We were congratulating ourselves upon having given up the casino long before we reached Mougins. We forgave the *cocher* his exaggeration about the workers in the rose fields. When one sees in paintings and in the cinematograph pretty girls engaged in agricultural pursuits, it is more than even money that they are models and actresses in disguise. I am enthusiastic in my cult of the country, but I have never carried it to the

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point of becoming ecstatic over country maidens. There must be, of course, as many good-looking girls in the country as in the city. But could a chorus of milkmaids to satisfy New York or Paris be recruited outside New York or Paris?

When we reached the uncompromising stretch of road that led up to Mougins, we took mercy upon the horses. The *cocher* had not driven them as slowly as he had promised. We walked a mile through olive orchards, and were in the town before we realized it. Unlike other hill cities of the Riviera that we had visited, Mougins has no castle and no walls. Few traces remain of outside fortifications. All around Mougins the land is cultivated. One does not realize the abruptness of the hilltop, for the city rises from fields and vineyards and orchards. Saint-Paul-du-Var and Villeneuve-Loubet remind one of the days when self-defense was a constant preoccupation. Mougins long ago forgot feudal quarrels, foreign invasions and raids of Saracens and Barbary pirates. The peasants still live together on a hilltop, going forth in the morning and coming back in the evening. But they have taken the stone of their walls for fences, and of their towers for barns. They have brought their tilled land up the hillside to the city.

On the main street, we had the impression that the medieval character of Mougins was lost by rebuilding. Ailanthus trees and whitewashed walls and red-tiled roofs greeted us. The church and the market-place were of the Third Republic. Sleepy cafés displayed enameled





**"The arch of a city gate lost itself in a modern building across the street"**



## MOUGINS

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tin advertisements of Paris drinks. The signs in front of the notions shop declared the merits of rival Paris newspapers. But when we were hunting out a vantage point from which to get the view of Cannes and the Mediterranean, the Artist saw much to tempt his pencil. Back from the main street, old Mougins survived, none the less charming from the constant contrasts of old and new.

The arch of a city gate, perfectly preserved on one side, lost itself in a modern building across the street. A woman, leaning out of a window, wanted to know what the Artist was doing. I explained our interest in the arch. Had there been a gate in her grandmother's time? Why, when so much of a former age had disappeared, did this half-arch remain? The woman was puzzled. It was incomprehensible that anyone should be interested in the arch, which had always been there. I thought I would try her on current events.

"Many men have gone from Mougins to the war?" I asked.

"Yes."

"How many?"

Instantly suspicion flashed in the woman's eyes. "Ask that at the Mairie," she snapped.

The conversation ended, but accusing eyes remained fixed upon me until the Artist had finished his sketch. I never felt more like a spy in my life, and could picture myself hauled before the authorities for having tried to secure military information. What an advantage to the

## RIVIERA TOWNS

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enemy if they could be sure just how many men had gone from Mougins!

Mougins lives in medieval fashion, if not wholly in medieval houses. Dependent upon occasional water from the heavens for carrying sewage down the hillside, Mougins has no use for gutters and drains. Rubbish is thrown from windows, and tramped down into last year's layer of pavement. Goats enjoy the rich pasturage of old boots and cans and papers and rags and vegetables that had lived beyond their day. Although, as we walked through the alleys, we saw no one, heard no one, the houses were inhabited: for much of the garbage was painfully recent, and clothes flapped on lines from window to window over our heads. The Artist suggested that the townspeople might be taking a siesta. But it was late in the afternoon for that. Then we remembered that Mougins was an agricultural community, and that the work of the town was in the fields. This explained also why we saw no shops and no evidences of trade. Olives, flowers, wine, fruit and vegetables are taken to the markets of Cannes and Grasse, and the people of Mougins buy what they need where they sell. Mougins has only bakeries and cafés. Bread and alcohol alone are indispensable where people dwell together.

We circled the city, and came out on the promenade across which we had entered Mougins. Every French town has an illustrious son, for whom a street is named, on whose birthplace a tablet is put, and to whom a monu-

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ment is raised. Our tour had taken us through the Rue du Commandant Lamy. We had read the inscription on his home, and were now before his monument, a bust on a slender pedestal, with the glorious sweep of La Napoule for a background. The peasants of Mougins, as they go out to and return from the labor of vineyard, orchard and field, pass by the Lamy memorial. Even when they are of one's own blood, is there inspiration in the daily reminder of heroes? How many from Mougins have followed Lamy's example? I have often wondered whether monuments mean anything except to tourists.

As I had recently been writing upon French colonial history, Lamy's daring and fruitful journeys in Central Africa were fresh in my mind, and I remembered his tragic death in the Wadai fifteen years ago. An old man had just come up the hill, and was dragging weary legs encased in clay-stained trousers across the promenade. A conical basket of lettuce heads was on his back, and he used the handle of his hoe as a cane.

"Did you know Lamy?" I inquired.

"Lamy was a boy in this town when I was a grown man going to my work. I used to pass him playing on this very spot," he answered.

As we walked along toward the main street, we asked whether there were others from Mougins who, like Lamy, had played a part in the history of France abroad. No, the people of Mougins liked to stay at home. Fortunately for the prosperity of the country, the young

## RIVIERA TOWNS

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men returned after their military service, and the attractions and opportunities of city life rarely took them and held them farther away than Cannes and Grasse. The Artist had his eye on the lettuce basket and the hoe, and I wanted to hear more of life in Mougins. We asked the old man to share a bottle with us.

The *cocher* was waiting in front of a café, and corroborated the statement on a huge painted sign, that here was to be found the true *vin mousseux* of Mougins. It was evident that we were not the first tourists to come from Cannes. The *cocher* was a friend of the proprietress, who made us welcome in the way tourists are greeted. Little cakes and a dusty bottle were produced promptly, and in the stream of words that greeted us we could gather that this was a red-letter occasion for us, and that it was possible to have the *vin mousseux* of Mougins shipped to Paris by the dozen or the hundred. This annoyed us and dampened our ardor for the treat. The Artist and I share a foolish feeling of wanting to be pioneers. We like to believe that our travels take us out of the beaten path, and that we are constantly discovering delectable places. After us the tourists—but not before!

The corkscrew of the proprietress, however, consoled us. A corkscrew through whose handle the beaded pressure of gas escapes before the cork is drawn may be common enough. But the fact remains that neither of us had seen one. We expressed our delight and wonder, and the Artist naïvely told the proprietress, before he



**"Mougins lives in medieval fashion, and has no use  
for gutters and drains"**





## MOUGINS

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tasted the wine, that he felt rewarded for the trip to Mougins just for the discovery of the corkscrew. After the first sip, I added that now we knew why we had walked up the long hill. The proprietress and the *cocher* beamed. Our enthusiasm meant money to them. The old man twisted his mouth contemptuously.

"Tell me, then," he said, "what was your thought of me when you saw me coming up the hill to the promenade with my burden of lettuce heads? And when I told you that I had seen Lamy playing as a boy on the spot where his statue stands? Sorry for me, were you not? Lamy had the good sense, you think, to quit Mougins, and go out to glory. I and the rest of Mougins, you think, have stayed here because we do not know any better. It is all in the point of view. One of you is enthusiastic over a patent corkscrew, and the other over the wine. You tourists from the city cannot understand us. It is because you carry your limitations with you. You think you lead a large, broad, varied life. You do not. Finding the greatest interest of Mougins in a patent corkscrew and sparkling wine betrays you."

"*Ces messieurs* have a passion for the country and for towns away from the railroad," remonstrated the *cocher*. "This afternoon I tempted them from the Casino at Cannes. They are a thousand times enthusiastic about Mougins, your homes, your streets, your views, and all they have seen in the valley coming here. If they had limitations, would they have wanted to come?"

## RIVIERA TOWNS

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It is senseless to think that they make the effort, that they spend the money, just to be pleased with what they see from their own world or what reminds them of their own world. I spend my life with tourists, and they always appreciate, I have never known them to fail to thank me for having brought them to Mougins."

Our critic—and, indeed, our judge—turned on the *cocher*.

"Tell me," he said sharply, raising his voice witheringly, "would you risk bringing tourists to Mougins if there were not this café and the *vin mousseux*?"

The *cocher* puffed his cigar vigorously. The Artist, highly delighted, broke an almost invariable rule to prove that the greatest interest of Mougins was not the corkscrew. He opened his sketch-book. While the old man was fingering the sketches, I ordered another bottle.

Our guest had been the vanguard of the homeward procession. All Mougins was now passing before us. We wondered if the war was responsible for the large number of women, from grandmothers to little girls, and why old men had to go out to work in the fields. For the passers-by included every category of the population of Mougins.

"Now you see," continued our mentor, "what it is to live. A score of men who knew Lamy have passed before you. They did not go to Africa to hunt negroes and to put our flag on the map at the same time as the names of unknown towns. They are here, and will eat a good dinner tonight. Lamy is dead. Now I do not

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say that we are heroes, and that our point of view is heroic. But I do say that we are not to be pitied. And I say, moreover, that we do as much for France as Lamy did. If we had all gone to Africa, there might be more names on the map, but there would be less food in the markets of Grasse and Cannes."

"Oh, for the ghost of Gray," commented the Artist. "He would be face to face with the 'unseen flower'—but not blushing!"

"A case of *auream quisquis mediocritatem diligit*," I answered.

We were getting classical as well as philosophical, and it was time to go. To whom was the mediocrity?

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**FRÉJUS**

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## CHAPTER XIII

### FRÉJUS

**T**HE ride from Théoule to St. Raphaël, by the Corniche de l'Estérel, gives a feeling of satiety. The road along the sea is a succession of curves, each one leading around a rocky promontory into a bay that causes you to exclaim, "This is the best!" For thirty-five kilometers there is constantly a new adjustment of values, until you find yourself at the point where comparatives and superlatives are exhausted. The vehicle of language has broken down. Recurrent adjectives become trite. When the search for new ones is an effort, you realize that nature has imposed, through the prodigal display of herself, a limit of capacity to enjoy. Of copper rocks and azure sea; of mountain streams hurrying through profusely wooded valleys; of cliffs with changing profiles; of conifers; of enclosed parks, whose charm of undergrowth run wild and of sunlit green tree-

## RIVIERA TOWNS

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trunks successfully hides the controlling hand of man to the uninitiated in forestry; of hedges and pergolas and ramblers and villas and lighthouses and islets and yachts, we had our fill.

But at La Napoule a Roman milestone announced that we were on the road to Forum Julii: and the very first thing that attracted us when we reached St. Raphaël was a bit of aqueduct on the promenade. It looked singularly out of place right by the sea, and surrounded by an iron fence quite in keeping with those of the hotels across the street. The inscription (Third Republic, not Roman) told us that this portion of the aqueduct from the River Siagne to Fréjus was removed from its original emplacement and set up here under the prefectship of Monsieur X, the subprefectship of Monsieur Y, and the mayorship of Monsieur Z. The fishing village that has rapidly grown into one of the most important "resorts" of the Riviera claims distinction on historical grounds. Napoleon landed at St. Raphaël on his return from Elba. Gounod composed Romeo and Juliet here. General Galliéni was cultivating his vineyard here when the war of 1914 broke out, and the call to arms sent him from his seclusion to become the savior of Paris. But when ruins became fashionable in the last decade of Queen Victoria, it was necessary for St. Raphaël to have an ancient monument. An arch of the aqueduct was imported to the beach with as little regard for congruous setting as Mr. Croesus-in-Ten-Years shows in importing an English lawn to his front yard at Long Branch and a





**"The Corniche de l'Estérel is a road of copper rocks  
and azure sea"**

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## FRÉJUS

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gallery of ancestral portraits to his dining-room on Fifth Avenue.

The Artist looked at the ruins in silence. He tried to gnaw the ends of his mustache. His eyes changed from amusement to contempt, and then to interest. I was ready for his question.

"Say, where is this town Fréjus?"

The *cocher* protested. He had bargained to take us to St. Raphaël, the horses were tired, and anyway there was no good hotel, no food, nothing to do at Fréjus.

"Where is Fréjus?" repeated the Artist. The *cocher* pointed his whip unwillingly westward along the shore. The Artist turned to me with his famous nose-and-eyes-and-chin-up expression.

"What do you say, *mon vieux?*"

"Decidedly Fréjus," I answered.

Accustomed to American queerness, the *cocher* resigned himself to the reins for another five kilometers.

Since the River Argens began to flow, it has been depositing silt against the eastern shore of the Gulf of Fréjus, at the point of which stands St. Raphaël. Consequently the road, sentineled by linden trees, crosses a rich plain, and is more than a mile from the sea when it reaches the city of Julius Cæsar. The upper ends of the mole of the ancient port, high and dry like ships at low tide, join the walls of the canal. You have to look closely to distinguish the canal and the depression of the basin into which it widens near the town. For where land has encroached upon sea, vegetable gardens and

## RIVIERA TOWNS

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orchards have been planted. Inland, the arches from the aqueduct of the Siagne shed their bricks in wheat fields and protrude from clumps of hazels. As it enters the city, the road turns back on itself and mounts to the market-place. The sharp outward bend of the elevation above the narrow stretch of lowland suggest that there was a time, long before Roman days, when Fréjus, like the towns of the Corniche de l'Estérel, was built on a promontory.

Fréjus belongs to no definite period. It is not Roman, medieval, modern. It is not a watering-place fashionable or unfashionable, a manufacturing town prosperous or struggling, a port bustling or sleepy, a fishing-village or a flower-gathering center. Fréjus suggests no marked racial characteristics in architecture or inhabitants. It is neither distinctly Midi nor distinctly Italian—as those terms are understood by travelers. Fréjus is unique among the cities of the Côte d'Azur because it has no unmistakable *cachet*. Fréjus suggests Rome, the Middle Ages, the twentieth century. Fréjus embraces pleasure-seeking, industries, fish, flowers, and soldiering. Mermaids, delightfully reminiscent of the Lido and Abbazia in garb, dive from the end of the mole into a safe swimming-pool; children of the proletariat in coarse black *tabliers*, who have not left sandals and white socks on the beach behind them, fish for crabs; naval aviators start hydroplanes from an aerodrome beside the Roman amphitheater; fishermen, of olive Mediterranean complexion, dry copper-tinted nets on the beach, laying them,



**"Fréjus belongs to no definite period. It has no marked racial characteristics in architecture or inhabitants"**

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## FRÉJUS

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despite the scolding of the Senegalese guards, upon piles of granite and cement blocks with which flaxen-haired German prisoners are building a new pier.

We had come to the beach for an after-luncheon smoke, and when we were not looking at the Senegalese and Germans, our eyes wandered from hydroplanes and machine-gun-armed motor-boats to the mermaids on the Roman mole. Not till we ran out of tobacco and the mole ran out of mermaids did we realize that Fréjus was still unexplored and unsketched. We gave ourselves a six o'clock rendezvous on the beach. The Artist started to seek Roman ruins, while I turned towards the market-place, cathedral bound. Sea-level villas came first, and then a quarter of sixteenth-century houses, many of which showed on the ground floor medieval foundations. In two places I got back to the Romans. A cross section of thin flat bricks with generous interstices of cement in the front wall of a greengrocer's opposite, indicated the line of the Roman fortification. Walking around the next parallel street, I managed to get into a garden where a long piece of the wall remained.

I came out to the St. Raphaël carriage road at a corner where arose a huge square tower of the Norman period. Almost to its crumbling top, houses had been built against it on two sides. The angle formed by the alley through which I came and the main street had fortunately kept the other two sides clear. The tower was the home of a wine and coal merchant, who had laid in a supply of cut wood on his roof to the height of several

## RIVIERA TOWNS

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feet above the irregular parapet. Outside one of the narrow vertical slits, which in ages past had served as vantage point for a vizored knight fitting arrow to bow, hung a parrot cage. "Coco" was chattering Marseilles sailor French.

A single gargoyle remained. It was a panther, elongated like a dachshund. He was desecrated and humiliated by having tied around his middle the end of the clothesline that stretched across the alley. This proved, however, that he still held firmly his place. The panther, ignoring change of fortune, looked down as of yore, snarling, and with whiskers stiffened to indicate that if he had been given hind legs, they would be ready for a spring. So worn was the gargoyle that ears and chin and part of forehead had disappeared. But you can see the snarl just as you can see the Sphinx's smile. When a thing is well done, it is done for all time. If a poor workman had fashioned that gargoyle, there would have been no panther and no snarl when it was put up there. But a master worked the stone, and what he wrought is ineradicable. It will disappear only with the stone itself. When we speak of ruins, we mean that a part of the material used in expressing a conception has not resisted climate and age and earthquake and vandalism. Armless, Venus de Milo is still the perfect woman. Headless, Nike of Samothrace is still symbolic of the glory of prevailing.

In the morning, before reaching St. Raphaël, we passed an African soldier limping along the dusty road. He





**"Arose a huge square tower of the Norman period"**



## FRÉJUS

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was dispirited even to the crumpled look of his red fez, and the sun, shining mercilessly, glinted from his rifle-barrel to the beads of perspiration on the back of his neck. We were going fast, and had just time to wave gayly to cheer him up. He did not return our salute. This struck us as strange. Fearing that he might be ill, we made the *cocher* turn round, and went back to pick him up. He declared that a sprained ankle made it impossible for him to keep up with his regiment, which had been marching since early morning. He was grateful for the lift, and beamed when we assured him that we could take him as far as St. Raphaël. At that time we were not thinking of going to Fréjus, the garrison town of the African troops. When we overtook the regiment and reached his company, we tried to intercede with the French sergeant. The sergeant was adamant and positive.

“A thousand thanks, but the man is shamming. He is lazy. He must get out.”

We had to give up our soldier. The sergeant knew his men, and justice is the basic doctrine which guides the discipline of the French colonial army. The regiment of Algerians must have stopped for lunch or maneuvers. For they were just coming through the Place du Marché when I reached there. Only the colonel was on horse. At the turn of the road, the captains stood out of rank to watch their companies wheel. Our soldier of the morning passed. He had forgotten his limp. The sergeant recognized me, and pointed to the soldier. His

## RIVIERA TOWNS

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left upper eyelid came down with a wink, as if to say, "Don't I know them!"

There is a spirit of *camaraderie* between officers and men in Fréjus that one never sees in native regiments of the British army. The French have none of our Anglo-Saxon feeling of caste and race prejudice, which makes discipline depend upon aloofness. French officers can be severe without being stern: and they know the difference between poise and pose. We Anglo-Saxons need to revise radically our judgment of the French in regard to certain traits that are the *sine qua non* of military efficiency. Energy, resourcefulness, coolness, persistence, endurance, pluck—where have these pet virtues of ours been more strikingly tested, where have they been more abundantly found, than in the French army?

The sign of the French colonial army is an anchor, and Fréjus is full of officers who wear it. They are mostly men of the Midi, Roman Gauls every inch of them. The Lamys, the Galliénis, the Joffres, the Fochs, the Lyauteys were born with a genius for leadership in war. Their aptitude for African conquest and their joy in African colonization are the heritage of their native land. The fortunes of southern France and northern Africa were inseparable through the ten centuries of the spread of civilization and the Latin and Teutonic invasions in the Western Mediterranean. The connection was unbroken from the time that Hannibal marched his African troops through Fréjus to Italy until the Omayyads conquered Tunis, Algeria and Morocco. It is the

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most natural thing in the world to see African troops in Fréjus. They belong here now, because since men began to sail in ships, they have always been at home here as friends or enemies. Mediterranean Africa and Mediterranean France received simultaneously political, social and religious institutions, and from the same source. As the Crescent wanes, Gaul is coming back into her own.

Fréjus shopkeepers suffer from the proximity of the upstart St. Raphaël. Fréjus keeps the bishop, but St. Raphaël has taken the trade. There is now only one business street. It runs from the Place du Marché through the center of the city to the Place du Dôme. You can get from one *place* to the other in about five minutes. Few people were on this street in mid-afternoon. None were going into the shops. I chose the department store, and asked the only saleswoman in sight for a collar. She brought down two styles, both of which were bucolic. Matched with a beflowered tie, either would have gone perfectly around the neck of a Polish immigrant in New York on his wedding day. I suggested that I be shown some other styles. The saleswoman gazed at me stonily.

"A bus leaves the corner below here for St. Raphaël every hour. You are there in twenty minutes. Or you can go by train in six minutes."

Up went the boxes to their shelf. There was nothing for me to do but get out.

One says Place du Dôme or Place de l'Hôtel de Ville,

## RIVIERA TOWNS

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depending upon whether sympathies are ultramontane or anti-clerical. For cathedral and city hall touch each other at right angles. LIBERTÉ-ÉGALITÉ-FRATERNITE is the legend in large letters on the cathedral wall: the one notice posted on the Hôtel de Ville is a warning of the last day to pay taxes. Two beggars stand guard at the cathedral portal: Senegalese with fixed bayonets flank the archway leading to the municipal courtyard. The Hôtel de Ville is a modern building, typical of French official taste of the present day: the cathedral is an edifice of several epochs, with a brick façade reminiscent of Bologna. The episcopal palace, adjacent to the cathedral, is part of the same structure. But it is used for government offices, and the entrance to its upper floor is by a staircase from the vestibule of the cathedral. The *Service de Santé Municipale* occupies the rooms along the portico that faces the cloister. The curé of souls has been banished to a private house across the street.

The cathedral quarter is wholly Louis XVI and First Empire. If I had begun my ramble there, I should have found much to admire. But I had been spoiled by the Louis XIII quarter nearer the sea. Travel impressions are largely dependent upon itinerary. I am often able to surprise a compatriot whose knowledge of Europe is limited to one "bang-up trip, and there wasn't much we missed, y'know," by being able to tell him the order in which he visited places. It is an easy thing to do. You simply have to notice how the tourist compares cities and

## FRÉJUS

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other "sights." He is blissfully ignorant of the fact that his positive judgments, his unhesitating preferences are accidental. They do not express at all his real tastes and his real appreciation of values. However cultivated and intelligent an observer he may be, unless he has carefully weighed and made proper allowance for the influence of itinerary, his judgments and preferences are not to be taken seriously. For years I honestly believed that the Rue de la Porte Rosette was one of the finest streets in the world. I told my friends of it. But when Alexandria was revisited, the Rue de la Porte Rosette was a shabby thoroughfare. After a year in the interior of Asia Minor, the Rue de la Porte Rosette was the first street through which I drove in coming back to European civilization. The next time I saw it I was fresh from years of constant residence in Paris. In my memory, Sofia is a gem of an up-to-date city, while Bucharest is a poor imitation of the occidental municipality. The chances are more than even that my comparative estimate of the two Balkan capitals is wholly wrong. For each time I have visited Sofia, it was in coming from Turkey, while stops at Bucharest have followed immediately after Buda-Pest and Odessa.

I wandered through the cathedral quarter with less enthusiasm than was its due, and soon decided to rejoin the Artist. He was not in the neighborhood of any of the Roman ruins. He was not sitting behind an *apéritif* on a café terrace. He was not watching soldiers play football in the courtyard of the barracks. He was not

## RIVIERA TOWNS

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sketching the Norman tower. He was not exp alleys of the medieval quarter. He was not look hydroplanes over the fence of the aerodrome. My had led me unconsciously back to the beach. Ther still an hour before our rendezvous. But where w stretched in the sand after lunch was a delightful and I had remembered to have my pouch filled *tabac*. I was not going to feel bored waiting for Where the German prisoners were working on the the black soldier guards called out to me to give a berth. Not being a local fisherman, I thought it w obey. The place of our siesta had to be reached by through ruins and climbing over a dune. The Artis there.

"You know," he explained, ignoring with the s of his hand the Roman mole where a new bevy of maids had appeared, "the progress of aviation has nated me ever since that July day at Rheims . Wright went up and stayed up. Just look what fellows are doing!"

Hydroplanes were appearing from the aerodr When they struck the water there was a hiss, w grew in volume and acuity as they skimmed the w After a few hundred yards, the machines rose as e as from land, circled up to the clouds and into t Coming down, the aviators practiced dipping and s ing by following and avoiding the purposely irre course of motor-boats. An officer, who spoke to find out, I suppose, who we were and why we were t





**"Exploring the alleys of the medieval quarter"**



## FRÉJUS

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remarked that the aviators were beginners. We were astonished. If this was learning to fly, what was flying?

"Our boys need little teaching to learn to fly," he explained. "That comes naturally. What they are learning is how to use their machines for fighting. Science and training and practice come in there. A world-old game is before you. It is only the medium that is new."

Words of wisdom. A bit of aqueduct led us to Fréjus in the hope of tasting the charm of a more ancient past than we had found in other Riviera cities. We were not disappointed. The charm was there. But we would not have found it, had we tried to dissociate it from the present, had we ignored or deplored its setting. Nothing that lives assimilates what is foreign to its nature: nothing that lives survives dissection. We took Fréjus as Fréjus was, and not as we wanted it to be or thought it must be. We took the aerodrome with the hippodrome, the coal merchant with the Norman tower, the parrot with the gargoyle, the Hôtel de Ville with the cathedral, and the mermaids with the mole.



**SAINT-RAPHAËL**

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## CHAPTER XIV

### SAINT-RAPHAËL

**O**N the terrace of our little home at Théoule, a lover of the Riviera read what I had written about Fréjus.

“If you have any idea of making a book out of your Riviera articles,” she said positively, “do not think you can dismiss the Estérel and Saint-Raphaël in so cavalier a fashion. That may be all right for Lester Hornby and you and serve as a good introduction to a story on Fréjus, but in your project of a book on Riviera towns—”

There is no need to say more. I looked over to the hills of the Estérel and felt sorry I had neglected them. I thought of past experiences, and agreed that there was something more to write about the French end of the Riviera. And then we put our heads together over a time table, planned to go to Agay by train, and walk on

## RIVIERA TOWNS

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the rest of the way to Saint-Raphaël. If the weather was good, we should climb Mont Vinaigre, and see the Estérel from its highest point.

"I don't care whether it affords good subjects for Lester or not," declared my boss. "I've done the trip, and I know it will be fun—and remember what Horatio was told!"

Humankind and human habitation had occupied the Artist and myself on almost every day afield from Théoule. Of course we had taken in the scenery, sketched it and spoken about it, but only as a background or accompaniment. From Cannes to Menton it is the human side of the Riviera that gets you. Nature is a sort of musical accompaniment to the song of human activity. Between Cannes and the Italian frontier, where the railway does not skirt the coast, you have the tramway. It is with you always, night and day, and makes itself heard at every curve. (The road is all curves!) As a result of the tramway, or perhaps as its cause, the Cannes-Menton stretch of the Riviera is solidly built up. Where the towns do not run into each other, an unbroken line of villas links them up. It is all the city—you cannot get away from that.

The road we follow to Fréjus was opened in 1903, a gift to the nation from the initiative and enterprise of the Touring-Club de France. The building of a tram line was fortunately forbidden. But with the railway and rapidly-developing use of the automobile, the little villages of the Estérel coast are being rapidly built up.



## SAINT-RAPHAËL

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Around the cape from Théoule, Le Trayas will soon rival Saint-Raphaël as a center for Estérel excursions. Then we have Anthéor, Agay, and Boulouris before reaching the long and charming villa-covered approach to Saint-Raphaël.

But we do not need to worry yet about what is going to happen. The blessed fact remains that the Estérel, between Théoule and Saint-Raphaël, is not yet closely populated like the rest of the Riviera. The tramway has not come. The railway frequently goes out of sight, if not out of hearing, for a mile or two. You have nature all by herself, with no houses, no human beings, no human inventions. The interior of the Estérel is as refreshingly different from the hinterland of the rest of the Riviera as most of the coast. There are no cities and towns back on the hills, no railways and tramways, no fine motor roads to make the pedestrian's progress a disagreeable and almost continuous passage through clouds of dust. The Estérel is hills and valleys, streams and forests and birds. You do not even have poles and wires to remind you of the world you have left for the moment.

The only way one comes to know this country is to have a villa on its fringe, as we did, and get lost in it every time you try to explore it. But such good fortune does not fall to everyone—nor the time—so it is comforting to point out that much of interest in the Estérel can be visited by motorists from the Corniche. Between La Napoule and Agay, the Touring-Club de France has

## RIVIERA TOWNS

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put sign-posts at every little path leading from the Corniche back into the interior. Some paths, also, where the road mounts on Cap Roux, lead down to grottoes on the water's edge or out to cliffs. Each sign gives the attraction and the distance. In our walks from Théoule we explored most of these, but discovered that one must not have an objective for lunch. For there is no connection between the number of kilometers and the time you must take. A map and compass are wise precautions. Some paths are scarcely marked at all, and when you have to slide down the side of a volcanic hill into a ravine and try to guess where you are supposed to go next, a woodsman's instinct is needed. The excursions are surer because more frequented, but none the less charming, after you have rounded the cape and crossed the little River Agay.

Agay, the Agathon of Ptolemy, boasts of the only harbor on the Estérel. On one side is the Pointe d'Anthéor and on the other Cap Dramont. Right behind the harbor rises the Rastel d'Agay, a jagged mass of copper rock a thousand feet high, climbing which is an excellent preparation for and indication of what one may expect in Estérel exploration. The way is not made easy for you as it is in the eastern end of the Riviera. But unless you strike an exceptionally warm day you have the will for pushing on afoot that is completely lacking at Monte Carlo and Menton.

The most ambitious and most interesting excursion into the Estérel that can be made in a day's walk is to

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go to Saint-Raphaël from Agay by way of Mont Vinaigre. You must make an early start and be ready to put in from five to six hours if you want to eat your lunch on the highest peak of the Estérel. It took us from seven o'clock to noon, and we kept going steadily. Crossing the railway, we struck out to the right of the Agay through forests of pine and cork to Le Gratadis, then along the Ravin du Pertus, pushing through the underbrush in blossom and skirting the many walls of rock that served to indicate where the path was not. It would have been easier to have made the round trip from Saint-Raphaël. But we should not have the full realization of the wild beauty of the Estérel nor that joyful feeling of reaching *astra per aspera*. The way down to Saint-Raphaël, after descending to Le Malpey, less than an hour from the summit, is by a carriage road.

We wished we could have seen the stars from Mont Vinaigre. There was a belvedere, and if we had only brought our blankets! But however warm the day, the nights are cool, especially two thousand feet up. Only those who have slept out at night in Mediterranean countries know how cold it can get. The top of Mont Vinaigre, almost in the center of the Estérel, affords a view of the ensemble of volcanic hills crowded together by themselves that makes you realize why it is so easy to get lost in the valleys between them. The forests are thick and the ravines go every which way. Inland the Estérel is separated from the foothills of the Maritime Alps by the valleys of the Riou Blanc and Siagne through

## RIVIERA TOWNS

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which runs the main road to Grasse, with a branch down the Siagne to Mandelieu. On the northern slope of the mountain is the road from Fréjus to Cannes, which leaves the Estérel at Mandelieu. It is one of the oldest roads in France. Several Roman milestones have recently been unearthed here. In these hills the Romans found coal and copper, and from the quarries along the coast at Boulouris and on Cap Dramont the quarries of blue porphyry are still worked.

In mining possibilities the whole region is as rich as it was twenty centuries ago; but, as in many other parts of France, little has been done to take advantage of them. Some years ago an American friend of mine, motoring with his wife from Fréjus to Cannes, discovered coal fields, formed a company, and is now drawing a revenue from hills whose former owners knew them only as preserves for shooting wild boar and other wild game. Within her own boundaries France has coal enough for all her needs if only she would mine it. But the French love to put their money into safe bonds of their own and foreign governments. The woolen stocking does not give up its hoarded coins for such enterprises as mines and domestic industries. Daughter's *dot* must be in a form acceptable to the prospective bridegroom's family. And then the French do not breed the new generation sufficiently large to furnish laborers for developing the natural resources of the country. They are hostile to immigration. When the war came Asia and Africa were called upon to man munition plants.



"We discovered that Saint-Raphaël had its old town"



## SAINT-RAPHAËL

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After the lesson of this war will the French seek to make their own country give up its wealth, or will they be willing once more to invest abroad, relying upon an aggressive foreign and colonial policy to open up and protect fields for capital far from home? On the edge of the Estérel, a dozen miles away, at Fréjus, Saint-Raphaël and Cannes, the people have put their money into Russian and Turkish bonds, Brazilian railways and coffee plantations. Their sons go to Algeria and Morocco to seek a fortune. Is this why only the coming of tourists and residents from a less hospitable clime has wrought any change in the country during the nineteenth century? From the standpoint of natural production the Riviera is relatively less important, less self-supporting than before the railway came.

By the forester's house of Le Malpey, after an hour's descent, we strike the carriage road. An hour and a half brings us to Valescure, an English colony built in pine woods. Another half hour and we are at Saint-Raphaël.

The next morning we discovered that Saint-Raphaël had its Old Town, which escaped us on our trip to Fréjus. Only the new name of the main street—Rue Gambetta—indicated that we were in France of the Third Republic. But, as in Grasse, we felt that we were really in France of all the centuries. There was none of that unmistakably Italian atmosphere that still makes itself felt in Nice, once you wander into quarters east of the Place Masséna. The thick walls of the old church—far too

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massive for its size—bear witness to the period when a Mediterranean coast town church was sanctuary more than in name. To the church the people fled when the Saracen pirates came, and while the priests prayed they acted on the adage that God helps those who help themselves, pouring molten lead from the roof and shooting arbalests through *meurtrières* that can still be distinguished despite bricks and plaster. This is the Saint-Raphaël that Napoleon knew when he returned from Egypt and, fifteen years later, sailed for his first exile at Elba.

But we found much that was attractive in the new Saint-Raphaël, which is as French as the old. The English keep themselves mostly at Valescure. Tourists come on *chairs-à-bancs* for lunch, and hurry back to Nice. Saint-Raphaël has developed as a French watering place. It does not have the protection of the high wall of the Maritime Alps. When the mistral, bane of the Midi, is not blowing, however, you wonder whether the native-born have not picked out for a seashore resort a more delightful bit of the Riviera coast than foreigners. A Frenchman once told me that Saint-Raphaël was the logical Riviera town for the French simply because the night train from Paris landed a traveler there in time for noon lunch.

“This fact alone,” he declared to me, “would induce me to choose Saint-Raphaël in preference to Cannes and Nice. You know that when twelve o’clock has struck the day is ruined for a Frenchman if he is not reasonably



## SAINT-RAPHAËL

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sure of being able to sit down pretty soon to a good hot meal. The P.-L.-M. put Cannes and Nice just a little bit beyond our limit."

As you emerge from the Old Town, at the harbor, you pass by a large modern church in Byzantine style, whose portal shows to excellent advantage six porphyry columns from the nearby Boulouris quarries. Along the sea is the Boulevard Félix-Martin, which runs into the Corniche de l'Estérel. For several miles you feel that there is nothing to detract from the spell of the sea. Elsewhere on the Riviera you have promenades embellished by great buildings and monuments and forts and exotic trees. You have coves and capes and villa-clad hills with the Alpine background. You climb cliffs and see the Mediterranean at bends, through trees and across luxurious gardens. Panorama after panorama with distractions galore react on you like a picture gallery. But at Saint-Raphaël the sea dominates. The Mediterranean alone holds you.

This is why you cannot endorse the bald statement flung at you by the famous sundial of the Rue de France at Nice:

"Io vado e vengo ogni giorno,  
Ma tu andrai senza ritorno."

It may be true enough of Nice that you will not go back. One has the confusion of human activities everywhere and tires of it everywhere. But just the sea alone is always new. Of course in the end the immortal sun

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has the better of you. But as long as life does last the effort will be made to get back to the Boulevard Félix-Martin at Saint-Raphaël. For there, better than anywhere else on the Riviera, one can look at the sea.

## **THÉOULE**





## CHAPTER XV

### THÉOULE

**T**HE Riviera belongs to a frontier department. To travel in frontier departments in war time a *sauf-conduit* is necessary. In theory, the *sauf-conduit* is good for a single trip and has to be renewed each time one goes from place to place. In theory, wherever a night is spent, a *permis de séjour* must be obtained from the local authorities. In theory, one may not sketch at all. But the Riviera is far from the battle front. Suspicious foreigners were caught in the police drag-net during the first year of the war, and since Italy came in on the side of France, the military authorities have not bothered much about enforcing their rules in the Alpes Maritimes. If one takes the initiative and insists upon being always *en règle*, bureaucracy holds to the strict letter of the law. But one who is not looking for trouble does not find it. Hotel proprietors, all-powerful in Riviera towns, do not want their clients bothered. Public sentiment is with the hotel proprietors: for the prosperity of the Riviera depends upon the unhampered coming and going of

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tourists and temporary residents. *Maires* and *adjoints* and *gendarmes*—and their relatives—have villas to let. It is to their interest to minimize red tape. *Sauf-conduits* are given for a month, and rarely asked for. The month is up only when one leaves. *Permis de séjour* are not mentioned unless one makes a protracted stay.

When we decided to settle down in Théoule, and something had to be done with our papers, we were dismayed to discover that the *mairie* was at Mandelieu, several miles inland. Helen and the children had a passport separate from mine, and our maids were English. Should we all have to “appear in person,” as the rule stated? The *adjoint* at Théoule declared that he could not think of allowing us to put ourselves out one least little bit, and were not the maids “*chères alliées*”? He would give himself the pleasure of taking our passports to Mandelieu to be registered and stamped. In the evening Monsieur l’Adjoint returned with *permis de séjour* in due form. Then he broached the subject near his heart. We were a large family and would tire of the hotel. The children needed a garden of their own to play in. The villa we wanted was waiting for us. It was right on the sea, and the view from the terrace—well, we could judge for ourselves tomorrow morning.

This was going a little too fast. The obligation of having papers expeditiously arranged was a great one, but we did not care to spend two or three months paying it off. We made an appointment for after lunch the next day, in order to have the morning to look over

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villas independently. Luckily Monsieur l'Adjoint's villa seemed all that he claimed it to be, and before our rendezvous with him we had decided that the location was ideal.

From Cannes to Menton the Riviera is cursed with electric tram lines. Only on Cap Martin can you live away from the shrieking of wheels around curves and the clanging of motormen's bells. We were led beyond Cannes to the Corniche de l'Estérel by the absence of a tram line. We could not get away from the railway, however, without abandoning the coast. Is there any place desirable for living purposes in which the railway does not obtrude? When choosing a country residence, men with families, unless they have several motors and several chauffeurs, must stick close to the railway. Monsieur l'Adjoint was showing us the salon of his villa when a whistle announced the Vintimille express. He hastened to anticipate the train by reassuring us that there was a deep cut back of the villa and that the road-bed veered away from us just at the corner of the garden. It was in the neighboring villa that trains were really heard. We were to believe him—at that moment chandeliers and windows and two vases of dried grasses on the mantelpiece danced a passing greeting to the train. Monsieur l'Adjoint thought that he had failed to carry the day. But we live on a Paris boulevard, and know that noises are comparative. Vintimille expresses were not going to pass all the time.

We were glad that the railway had not deterred us.

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It was good to be right above the water. Some people do not like the glare of sun reflected from the sea. But they are late risers. Parents of small children are accustomed to waking with the sun. On the first morning in the Villa Étoile the baby chuckled early. Sun spots were dancing on the ceiling, and she was watching them. The breakfast on the terrace was no hurried swallowing of a cup of coffee with eyes fixed upon a newspaper propped against a sugar bowl. The agreement of the day before had been tripartite. The proprietor was easily satisfied with bank notes. But the wife had not consented to leave the freedom of the hotel until it had been solemnly agreed that newspapers were to be refused entrance into the Villa Étoile, and that watches were not to be drawn out (even furtively) from waistcoat pockets.

Unless agreements are fortified by favorable circumstances and constantly recurring interest, they are seldom lived up to. When promises are difficult to keep, where are the men of their word? Doing what one does not want to do is a sad business. That is why Puritanism is associated with gloom. On the terrace of the Villa Étoile no man could want to look at a newspaper or a watch. Across the Gulf of La Napoule lies Cannes. Beyond Cannes is the Cap d'Antibes. Mountains, covered with snow and coming down to the sea in successive chains, form the eastern horizon. Inland, Grasse is nestled close under them. Seaward, the Iles de Lérins seem to float upon the water. For on Sainte-Marguerite the line of demarcation between Mediterranean blue and





**"To the west the Gulf of La Napoule ends in the pine-covered promontory of the Esquillon"**



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forest green is sharp, and Saint-Honorat, dominated by the soft gray of the castle and abbey, is like a reflected cloud. Between Théoule and Cannes the railway crosses the viaduct of the Siagne. Through the arches one can see the golf course on which an English statesman thought out the later phases of British Imperialism. To the west, the Gulf of La Napoule ends in the pine-covered promontory of the Esquillon. Except for a very small beach in front of the Théoule hotel, the coast is rocky. From February to May our terrace outlook competed successfully with the war.

Young and old in Théoule have to make a daily effort to enjoy educational and religious privileges. We wondered at first why the school and church were placed on the promontory, a good mile and a half from the town. But later we came to realize that this was a salutary measure. The climate is insidious. A daily antidote against laziness is needed. I was glad that I volunteered to take the children to school at eight and two, and go after them at eleven and four, and that they held me to it. In order to reach a passable route on the steep wall of rock and pine, the road built by the Touring-Club de France makes a bend of two kilometers in the valley behind Théoule. By taking a footpath from the hotel, the pedestrian eliminates the bend in five minutes. In spite of curves, the road is continuously steep and keeps a heavy grade until it reaches the Pointe de l'Esquillon.

I never tired of the four times a day. Between the Villa Étoile and the town was the castle, built on the

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water's edge. After Louis XIV it became a soap factory, and was restored to its ancient dignity only recently. I ought not to say "dignity," for the restorer was a baron of industry, and his improvements are distressing. The entrance to the park created on the inner side of the road opposite the château is the result of landscape den-tistry. The creator did not find that the natural rock lent itself to his fancies, and filled in the hollows with stones of volcanic origin. On the side of the hill, foun-tains and pools and a truly massive flight of steps have been made. Scrawny firs are trying to grow where they ought not to. Quasi-natural urns overflow with captive flowers, geraniums and nasturtiums predominating. Ferns hang as gracefully as shirtings displayed in a de-partment store window. Stone lions defy, and terra cotta stags run away from, porcelain dogs. There are bowers and benches of imitation petrified wood.

American money may be responsible for the château garden, but the villas of Théoule are all French. Modern French artistic genius runs to painting and clothes. There is none left for building or house-fur-nishing. French taste, as expressed in homes, inside and outside, is as bad as Prussian. We may admire mildly the monotonous symmetry of post-Hausmann Paris. When we get to the suburbs and to the provincial towns and to summer and winter resorts, we have to con-fess that architecture is a lost art in France. In America, especially in our cities, we have regrettable traces of mid-Victorianism, and we have to contend with Irish poli-

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ticians and German contractors. In the suburbs, and in the country, however, where Americans build their own homes, we have become accustomed to ideas of beauty that make the results of the last sixty years of European growth painful to us. Our taste in line, color, decoration, and interior furnishing is at hopeless variance with that of twentieth-century Europe. We admire and we buy in Europe that which our European ancestors created. Our admiration—and our buying—is confined strictly to Europe of the past. Present-day Europe displays German *Schmuck* from one end to the other, and France is no exception.

On the walk to school you soon get beyond the château and the villas. But even on the promontory there is more than the dodging of automobiles to remind one that this is the twentieth century. The Corniche de l'Estérel has been singled out by the moving-picture men for playing out-of-door scenarios. When the sun is shining, a day rarely passes without film-making. The man with a camera has the rising road and bends around which the action can enter into the scene, the forest up and the forest down, the Mediterranean and mountain and island and Cannes backgrounds. Automobile hold-ups with pistols barking, the man and the maid in the woods and on the terrace, the villain assaulting and the hero rescuing the defenseless woman, the heroine jumping from a rock into the sea, and clinging to an upturned boat—these are commonplace events on the Corniche de l'Estérel.

The world of cinemas and motors does not rise early.

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On the morning walk, children and squirrels and birds were all one met. Children go slowly, and squirrels and birds belong to nature. There was always time to breathe in the forest and the sea and to look across to the mountains. When *cartables* and *gouters* were handed over at the school gate, parental responsibility ceased for three hours. One had the choice of going on around the point towards Trayas or down to the sea.

The people of Théoule say that Corsica, sixty miles away, can be seen from the Esquillon. All one has to do is to keep going day after day until "atmospheric conditions are favorable." The Touring-Club de France has built a belvedere at the extremity of the Esquillon. Arrows on a dial indicate the direction of important places from Leghorn to Marseilles. The Apennines behind Florence, as well as Corsica, are marked as within the range of visibility. The Apennines had not been seen for years, but Corsica was liable to appear at any time. The first day the Artist went with me to the Esquillon, an Oldest Inhabitant said that we had a Corsica day. A milkwoman *en route* reported Corsica in sight, and told us to hurry. Towards nine o'clock the sun raises a mist from the sea, she explained. In the belvedere we found a girl without a guide book who had evidently come over from Trayas. She was crouched down to dial level, and her eyes were following the Corsica arrow. She did not look up or move when we entered. Minutes passed. There was no offer to give us a chance. We coughed and shuffled, and the Artist

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sang "The Little Gray Home in the West." I informed the Artist—in French—that a specialist had once remarked upon my hyperopic powers, and that if Corsica were really in sight I could not fail to see it.

Not until she had to shake the cramp out of her back did the girl straighten up.

"Corsica is invisible today," she announced.

"Yes," I answered sadly. "Ten minutes ago the mist began to come up. You know, sun upon the water—" A look in her eyes made me hesitate. "And all that sort of thing," I ended lamely.

"Nonsense," she said briskly. She surveyed the Artist from mustache to cane point and turned back to me. "You, at least," she declared, "are American, but of the unpractical sort. And you are as unresourceful as you are ungallant, Monsieur. How do I know? Well, you were complaining about my monopolizing the dial. There is a map on the tiles under your feet, and a compass dangles uselessly from your watch-chain. I wonder, too, if you *are* hyperopic. You know which is the Carlton Hotel over there in Cannes. Tell me how many windows there are across a floor."

The atmosphere was wonderfully clear, and the Carlton stood out plainly. But I failed the test.

The girl laughed. I did not mind that. When the Artist started in, I turned on him savagely.

"Well, you count the Carlton windows," I said.

"No specialist ever told me I was hyperopic," he came back.

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I had to save the day by answering that I was glad to be myopic just now. Who wanted to see Corsica any longer? The girl knew interesting upper paths on the western side of the promontory. She had as much time as we, or rather, I must say regretfully, she and the Artist had more time than I. For eleven o'clock came quickly, and I hurried off to fulfill my parental duty. The Artist told me afterwards that there was a fine *cuisine* at the Trayas restaurant.

I did think of my compass one day: for I had sore need of it. But, as generally happens in such cases, I was not wearing it. Between Théoule and La Napoule, the nearest town on the way to Cannes, a tempting forest road leads back into the valley. A sign states that a curious view of a mountain peak, named after Marcus Aurelius, could be had by following the road for half a dozen kilometers. It was one of the things tourists did when they were visiting the Corniche for a day. Consequently, when one was staying on the Corniche, it was always an excursion of the morrow. During the Artist's first week, we were walking over to Mandelieu to take the tram to Cannes one morning, and suddenly decided that the last thing in the world for sensible folks to do was to go to Cannes on a day when the country was calling insistently. We turned in at the sign. After we had seen the view, we thought that it would be possible to take a short cut back to Théoule. The wall of the valley that shut us off from the sea must certainly be the big hill just behind the Villa Étoile. If, instead of





**"Despite curves, the road is continuously steep, and  
keeps a heavy grade until it reaches the  
Pointe de l'Esquillon"**

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retracing our steps towards La Napoule, we kept ahead, and remembered to take the left at every cross path, we would come out at the place where the Corniche road made its big bend before mounting to the promontory. It was all so simple that it could not be otherwise. We were sure of the direction, and fairly sure of the distance, since we had left the motor road between Théoule and La Napoule.

There was an hour and a half before lunch. A lumber road followed the brook, and the brook skirted the hill beyond which was Théoule and the Villa Etoile. It was a day to swear by, and April flowers were in full bloom. It was delightful until we had to confess that the hill showed no signs of coming down to a valley on the left. Finally, at a point where a path went up abruptly from the stream, we decided that it would be best to cut over the summit of the hill and not wait until the Corniche road appeared before us. In this way we would avoid the walk back from the hotel to our villa, and come out in our own garden. But on the Riviera nature has shown no care in placing her hills where they ought to be and in symmetrizing and limiting them. They go on indefinitely. So did we, until we came to feel that we would be like the soldiers of Xenophon once we spied the sea. But the cry "Thalassa" was denied us. Eventually we turned back, and tried keeping the hill on the right. This was as perplexing as keeping it on the left had been. A pair of famished explorers, hungry enough to eat canned tuna-fish and crackers with relish, reached

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a little town inland from Mandelieu about seven o'clock that night with no clear knowledge of from where or how they had come.

Between the town of Théoule and the belvedere of the Esquillon, down along the water's edge, one never tires of exploring the caves. Paths lead through the pines and around the cliffs. The Artist was attracted to the caves by the hope of finding vantage points from which to sketch Grasse and Cannes and Antibes and the Alps and the castle on Saint-Honorat. But he soon came to love the copper rocks, which pine needles had dyed, and deserted black and white for colors. When the climate got him, he was not loath to join in my hunt for octopi. The inhabitants tell thrilling stories of the monsters that lurk under the rocks at the Pointe de l'Esquillon and forage right up to the town. One is warned to be on his guard against long tentacles reaching out swiftly and silently. One is told that slipping might mean more than a ducking. Owners of villas on the rocks make light of octopi stories, and as local boomers are trying to make Théoule a summer resort, it is explained that the octopi never come near the beach. Even if they did, they would not be dangerous there. How could they get a hold on the sand with some tentacles while others were grabbing you?

I have never wanted to see anything quite so badly as I wanted to see an octopus at Théoule. Octopus hunting surpasses gathering four-leaf clovers and fishing as an occupation in which hope eternal plays the principal

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rôle. I gradually abandoned other pursuits, and sat smoking on rocks by the half day, excusing indolence on the ground of the thrilling story I was going to get. I learned over again painfully the boyhood way of drinking from a brook, and lay face downward on island stones. With the enthusiastic help of my children, I made a dummy stuffed with pine cones, and let him float at the end of a rope. Never a tentacle, let alone octopus, appeared. I had to rest content with Victor Hugo's stirring picture in "The Toilers of the Sea."

A plotting wife encouraged the octopus hunts by taking part in them, and expressing frequently her belief in the imminent appearance of the octopi. She declared that sooner or later my reward would come. She threw off the mask on the first day of May, when she thought it was time to return to work. She announced to the Artist and me that the octopi had gone over to the African coast to keep cool until next winter, and that we had better all go to Paris to do the same. We were ready. Théoule was still lovely, and the terrace breakfasts had lost none of their charm. But one does not linger indefinitely on the Riviera unless *dolce far niente* has become the principal thing in life.

THE END











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